

EXHIBIT 12

The Gun Digest®
Book of

THE

AR-15

Patrick Sweeney

- **History**
- **Performance Tests**
- **Maintenance Tips**



Copyright ©2005 Patrick Sweeney

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a critical article or review to be printed in a magazine or newspaper, or electronically transmitted on radio, television, or the Internet.

Published by



Gun Digest® Books, an imprint of F+W Media, Inc.
Krause Publications • 700 East State Street • Iola, WI 54990-0001
715-445-2214 • 888-457-2873
www.krausebooks.com

To order books or other products call toll-free 1-800-258-0929
or visit us online at www.gundigeststore.com

ISBN-13: 978-0-87349-947-7

ISBN-10: 0-87349-947-6

Designed by Kara Grundman
Edited by Kevin Michalowski

Printed in the United States of America

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

For those of us tuned into guns, a firearm represents a time, place, incident or age. If you see someone in a suit, holding a Thompson, you immediately think "Roaring Twenties." The same image, but with Winston Churchill instead of an anonymous person, and you think "WWII." If you see a tri-corner hat and a smooth-bore musket, you think "American Revolution." (with apologies to my international readers, who may think of some other fracas)

The M-16 brings up a plethora of images, each with a particular time and place. A triangular handguard and a plain green uniform brings recollections of Vietnam. Round handguards and woodland camouflage brings photographs from Central America to mind, or to someone stationed in Europe, Germany, Italy, Belgium or Turkey. And an M-4 and tan/desert uniforms bring to mind Afghanistan, Iraq and whatever else the current situation brings us.

The ubiquity of the AR-15/M-16 rifle is due to exposure and time. While you or I might only have a single drawing of the American Revolution to fix that image in our memories, we have a constant repetition of images of modern rifles, courtesy the modern news media. As an example, several friends of mine, when they see an AK-47, cannot escape the visceral reaction of "there is something terribly wrong here" while my first reaction on seeing one is to think of the news photo of an AK being held aloft at Wounded Knee. (As far as I know, no one was ever prosecuted for owning or handling that firearm. Never mind that at that time there was no such thing as a semi-automatic only AK, and thus it had to be a select-fire rifle.) They were a few years older, there in the jungle, and I was reading the newspapers at home.

The AR-15 has been with us now for over 40 years. Longer than the '03 Springfield was a front-line rifle, longer than the M-1 Garand, and far longer than the M-14. (Despite the M-14 still being used in many tasks, it isn't a front-line, general-issue weapon.) Despite the struggles of the 30-caliber crowd, the AR has supplanted 30-caliber rifles as the winner in target competitions. It is now being accepted as a law enforcement tool, and is embraced by many as an entirely suitable defensive firearm. There are still some who feel it isn't powerful enough, but "powerful enough" is not a valid question. If it were, we'd still be using rifles with designations that start in "5" or "6" as only those calibers can be depended on to stop miscreants reliably. As in 50-caliber or bigger, although there were instances in the American Civil War of combatants who were shot with .58 caliber Minie balls who kept on fighting. Indeed, there were reports over a century ago coming back from the Indian Frontier about the adoption of a smaller caliber. From British Officers, complaining that the new .303 round did not stop the natives as well as the old .45 had.

The AR is deceptive: It is both the easiest rifle to home-gunsmith, and can be the most maddening to get properly assembled and reliably functioning. When I was a practicing professional gunsmith, during the height of the first (there will be more to come, I'm sure) wave of home-assembled kits, I did a good business finishing the assembly and ensuring proper function of home-assembled AR kits that the owners had gotten almost finished. Sometimes they needed a special tool to finish, something too expensive to buy for a one-time build. Or in other cases they needed special knowledge to figure out the real problem, and apply the correct fix, not the "obvious" and wrong one.



The AR doesn't need any specialized stock work, no sanding, oil-finished wood, or complicated glass bedding. It doesn't need (in most cases) a free-floated barrel or special bedding methods. The triggers are simple, and with a little work or the right parts can be quite livable. And the recoil is soft, encouraging practice, practice and more practice. Where you can beat yourself into a flinch in an afternoon with a 30-caliber rifle, you can burn out an AR barrel on a weekend with no fear of a dreaded flinch.

And for the gadget buffs there is perhaps no rifle on the face of the planet for which you can buy more gear, accessories, add-ons, improvements and just plain "stuff." You could easily take a 6-pound AR and turn it into a 12-pound AR by bolting on "essential additions." Indeed, target shooters add plain old lead weights to bring their ARs up past 15 pounds, to make them more stable for long shots.

Those who have read my earlier books know my methods in these matters. In order to properly address the field of AR-15 rifles, I needed rifles to test. It would not be suitable to simply photograph and write about my own rifles. For the most part, they are not stock. And they have all been fussed over until they can be depended on for reliable function. And it would not be acceptable to simply digest and re-write the press handouts of various manufacturers and wholesalers. Not that they would lie, but the whole idea of marketing is to remove dispassionate analysis and replace it with lust. So, I needed rifles. But what to cover? There are a host of parts suppliers, and gunsmiths who are at least basically competent to build an AR. Many are more than just competent, and turn out marvels of reliability and accuracy. How to decide which guns, options, accessories and custom features for the first book? I settled on two tests, both of which a manufacturer had to meet, or I would not give a full test and review: They had to manufacture or assemble complete rifles. And they had to have their name on the receiver. Bob Smith of "Bob Smiths Gunsmithing" may build excellent ARs for his SWAT and competition customers. But if it didn't say "Bob Smith Armory" on the receiver, he'd have to wait for the second book. Assembly was also a requirement. If a firm offered complete kits, but not assembled rifles, they too would wait. I inquired with all the manufacturers I could find. In the process of writing the book, I found even more than had known of. I figured I'd be lucky to locate a dozen makers. I ended up with over 30 rifles. And, I re-discovered the world of marketing. A world where some makers are much better than others.

As you read this there are no doubt makers who have yet to send the promised rifle or rifles. I asked everyone I could find, and in this regard the internet is quite useful. I found makers who had a rifle to me by the end of that week. I found makers who took six months to get me a rifle. I found makers who promised and didn't deliver. And others who were more than happy to sell me a rifle, but had none to loan. For the readers who are still under the illusion that all gun

writers get to "keep the goodies" I have news for you: the local FedEx office knows me on sight. Rifles go back. There are some writers who keep everything that is sent to them. They are well-known in the industry and receive a very few rifles for testing. (Some of my problems in getting test rifles may be due to unfortunate experiences on the part of the manufacturer with those other writers.) Let me repeat this for those who feel I may have slighted their favorite rifle: I asked everyone I could track down. I tested all rifles that were sent to me. If a rifle did not meet my expectations, I inquired with the maker for a solution. If the problem was solved, I did not make a fuss over it. If it didn't return, or was never satisfactorily fixed, it did not make it into the book.

I also needed ammo. I cannot say enough good things about Jeff Hoffman at Black Hills, and the staff at Hornady. My delivery driver staggered under the load of ammo shipped. There was nothing I asked for that I didn't receive at least some amount. Some of the ammo, like the Mk 262 Mod 1, so highly sought-after in Iraq and Afghanistan, was scarce enough in the pipeline that I only got enough to test the rifles for accuracy. Fair enough, the guys overseas have a more pressing need for it than I do.

So, if there is a rifle you were curious about, but I don't list, there is a reason. I left out none of the ones I received that worked. Good or indifferent, the performance of each was noted. The really bad ones will have to try harder for Volume 2. Some were so good I really, really considered buying rather than sending back. But what is a man to do with a dozen AR-15s?

The AR-15 is presently in a resurgence. There are more manufacturers than there have ever been. The armed forces are using more of them than they have in more than a generation. (You thought everyone in the Army or Marine Corps spent all their time on the range, wearing out rifles? You poor, mislead taxpayer!) They are also looking to replace it with more fervor than they ever have. However, the latest rounds are not trying to replace it with an "all dancing, all singing" electronic rifle. Yes, we can currently have a PDA that is also a cell phone, digital camera, GPS unit and MP3 player. But rifles aren't consumer electronics. Rifles launch bullets, and nothing in the digital revolution so far (except CNC machining stations) has changed how rifles work or are used. But the next decade or so promises to be very entertaining in the regard of attempts to replace the AR.

As for the next volume, that will be out soon, and there we'll dive headfirst into modifications, basic gunsmithing and maintenance (beyond cleaning) and accessories galore. We'll also cover the guns that didn't arrive in time, or took a lot of work to struggle up to satisfactory performance. Use this book to select and purchase a basic gun. Then, when you encounter the second volume, you'll have had a good time shooting your gun and planning the modifications, upgrades and improvements.

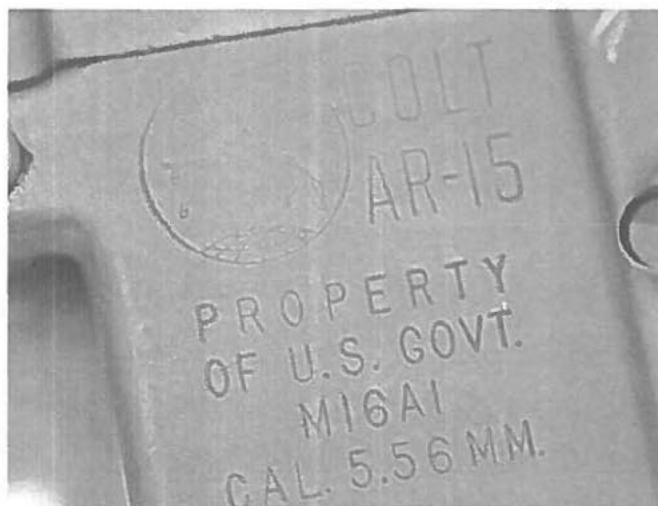
History Of The AR-15 And How It Is Made

I am not going to give you a detailed, blow-by-blow history of the trials, tribulations, acceptance and use of the AR-15/M-16. There are a number of books out there in which you can find out the exact date some such memo or another was written, authorizing this or squashing that. If you want historical minutia (which some of us do) then try those other titles. My intent here is to point out some of the highs and lows, and illustrate how they created the rifle we now use, build, wear out and invest so much passion in.

The history of the AR-15/M-16 is actually a four-part story so far. First, there is the story of the change in how a rifle was viewed and used, from the adoption of a modern service rifle in the late 19th century to the middle 20th. Then, the acceptance and adoption of the M-16 by the U.S. Department of Defense. Third, the improvements made to it, and the acceptance of the AR by civilian shooters. And finally, the culmination of the M-16 into the M-4, and the acceptance (so far) by the Armed Forces that the digital revolution was not going to come to small arms anytime soon.

Just to keep us all from going crazy, and to make my editor's job easier, I will as of this moment stop using the clumsy construction of "AR-15/M-16." When I'm talking about the rifle system in general, I'll simply use "AR-15." When I mean the select-fire or burst-fire basic system, I'll call it "M-16." And when I'm talking about a specific rifle or model, I'll use its exact designation, like M-4, XM-177, etc. Otherwise you'd be faced with the prospect of seeing the clumsy construction a couple of thousand times. (And I'd have to type it, making us all a bit cranky.) And as the rifle was known as the AR-15 even for a while after it was made as a select-fire weapon (I've seen a bunch of military select-fire rifles marked "AR-15", made by Colt) it is correct to call them all that. Be aware that Colt owns the rights and trademark to "AR-15" and no rifle not made by Colt can be properly or legally called that. Now that we've gotten all cozy with a comfortable agreement, let me upset some of you:

Eugene Stoner did not invent the gas impingement system that is the heart of the AR-15. In 1942, Sweden adopted the Ljungman rifle in 6.5 caliber. They did not replace all the bolt-action rifles in use, but simply added the Ljungman to each squad of riflemen as a means of increasing firepower. After the war, Sweden managed to entice the Danish armed forces into adopting a modified Ljungman, and even sold Egypt tooling and technical help in setting up their own manufacturing facilities. The armed forces of Egypt were at least sharp enough to insist in changing the rifle to 7.92 Mauser from the 6.5X55 of the Swedish model. The Ljungman was unique in having the direct-impingement gas system, which Stoner either copied or designed anew not knowing it existed. The Ljungman is still unique in the hazard it poses to users. When I was new to the gun business, I worked at a gun shop that specialized in surplus and collectible firearms. We'd see Ljungmans passing through the shop now and then, and my first exposure was to watch it being handled without touching it. You see, the bolt and carrier of the Ljungman are triangular in cross section, and there are no safety guards. You open



The AR now is not the same as the M-16. In the early days, it was often called both by its manufacturer, Colt.



The old A1 sight wasn't good enough for the Marines, who wanted a sight that let them score well on the 500 yard line of their qualification course. The A1, with two springs and three moving parts, became the A2 sight, with four springs and five moving parts.



PacWestArms made excellent receivers, and no rifles. We finished assembly of dozens back in the 1980s, when home gunsmiths got in too deep.



In the not-so-old days, you could have bare receivers in a plethora of names, to be built to your own specs or needs. Here, an Olympic before they were Olympic.

targets were not impressed. So what else was new? (The best comment I ever heard on the subject was this: "Out there, somewhere, there is a GI who can tell you about the guy who needed a second burst of .50 before he went down." Nothing is perfect, nor should we expect it to be.)

The M-16A2 turned out to be a great rifle for shooting high scores on the qualification course, but not the best rifle for shooting people. Not the first time we've made that mistake. The AR-15, with a little more development in bullets, suddenly swept the 7.62mm rifles off the competition courses. At 600 yards, an 80- or 90-grain .224-inch bullet has less wind drift than a 7.62mm bullet does. And the recoil is markedly less, too. Combined with the more-durable (in target rifle mode) design of the AR-15, the competition shooters on the rifle ranges suddenly found themselves in a predicament

familiar to IPSC shooters: keeping up with the equipment race. If you wanted to be competitive you had to leave your tuned M-14 in the rack, with its heavy recoil, and get an AR-15 racegun or Service Rifle for competition. Back in the Vietnam War years, Colt worked on a shortened version of what was already a carbine. The XM-177, XM-177E1 and XM-177E2 were variations of shortened AR-15s. With a shorter barrel came a more ferocious muzzle blast. So Colt developed a flash hider that actually worked to some small degree as a silencer. (Moderator, suppressor, "can", whatever you want to call it.) While it wouldn't pass muster as an actual sound suppressor, it did cut the muzzle blast by a few decibels. Which became Colt's problem later. You see, the U.S. State Department clamped down on the export of suppressors. Colt had a popular model that they couldn't sell with the flash hider. Not the first time Colt has been stymied.

Meanwhile, a cottage industry was building in the AR-15 market. You had two choices in the early 1980s: you could buy a Colt, who offered a paltry one or two models of the AR-15, or you could dream about what Colt might build if they paid any attention to the market. With suppliers and subcontractors able to make parts, the only critical parts were uppers and lowers. And uppers could be had military-surplus. Which left lowers. The forge companies found themselves being approached by would-be AR makers. And for enough money, you could buy forged lowers and do the machining or contract with a machine company to machine forgings to your specs, with your name on them. I saw a number of lowers back then machined from billets of aluminum, as well as machined from forgings or castings. As the market grew, the quality improved. There are many brands of lowers from those days still in use: PWA (PacWestArms) SGW, the early name for Olympic, E.A. Co, Essential Arms, there are bunches of them. And few were made as complete rifles. Almost all were assembled, either in basements by aspiring gunsmiths

The AR-15 Is An Assault Weapon

Perhaps, under inane state law, written by legislators with no practical knowledge of firearms. The standard definition of an assault weapon is that it is a lightweight shoulder weapon, fires a round of medium power, and is select fire. That is, you can choose to fire semi, burst or automatically. By that definition, the M-16 and M-4 are assault weapons, but the AR-15 is not. If we use the typical legislative approaches, we find that a whole lot of other rifles, not usually associated with assault weapons, fit the definition. Such as the Remington Model 8, so named from its year of introduction, 1908. Semi-automatic, capable of accepting a detachable magazine of high capacity, medium power, and there were even a batch made for military trials in the 1920s that accepted bayonets! Try to convince a deer hunter using granddad's rifle he's using an "assault weapon." Or, the first real assault weapon, the M-1 Carbine. Well, when they rolled out the M-2, the select-fire one, it was an assault weapon. What is really a scream, is that by the logic of the gun banners, the M-1 Carbine should be first on the list. It was, after all, the first, and the Army found it absurdly easy to make it into a full-auto carbine. But almost no list ever published of "assault weapons to be banned" includes it. I guess it just shows how little such people really know.

The typical approach is to use cosmetics to define a firearm. So, if it has a bayonet lug, takes a magazine, has a pistol grip, it is an assault weapon? I guess then, if I take the neighbors Ford Escort, paint a big number on the side, affix a lot of advertisers tickers on it and install a roll bar, I have a NASCAR Stock car?

The AR-15 isn't an assault weapon. It's a rifle, like many others. Get over it.

The AR-15 Is Easy To Convert To Full Auto

I guess that depends on what your definition of "easy" is. Give me an afternoon, a machine shop, and a rifle, and I can make it full auto, too. Any rifle except perhaps a single-shot. Don't believe me? When John Browning had an idea for a machinegun, he converted the first extra rifle lying around his shop as a test project. (Don't panic, it was the 1890s and no one was up in arms about it. There wasn't even a law against it!) That rifle was a lever-action rifle. When the Australians had the little problem of the Japanese intending to invade, they found they had few machineguns but lots of bolt-action rifles. So they designed and converted a bunch of bolt-action rifles to be light machineguns, complete with 20-round box magazines.

You can be pretty sure that when you're talking to someone, when they say "the AR-15 is easy to convert" that they've never done it. And probably have no idea how to do it, nor even seen one that had been so converted. And you can include a lot of police chiefs in that group.

If it isn't easy, why is the ATFE so strict on trying? Because there are a large number of people out there who are not as clever as they think, and who don't know the danger they are running. I've read of some of the methods, and let me tell you, I'd rather learn to juggle chain saws than try some of them.



The M-1 Carbine is often overlooked as an "assault weapon" but was, in its M-2 form, actually the first.

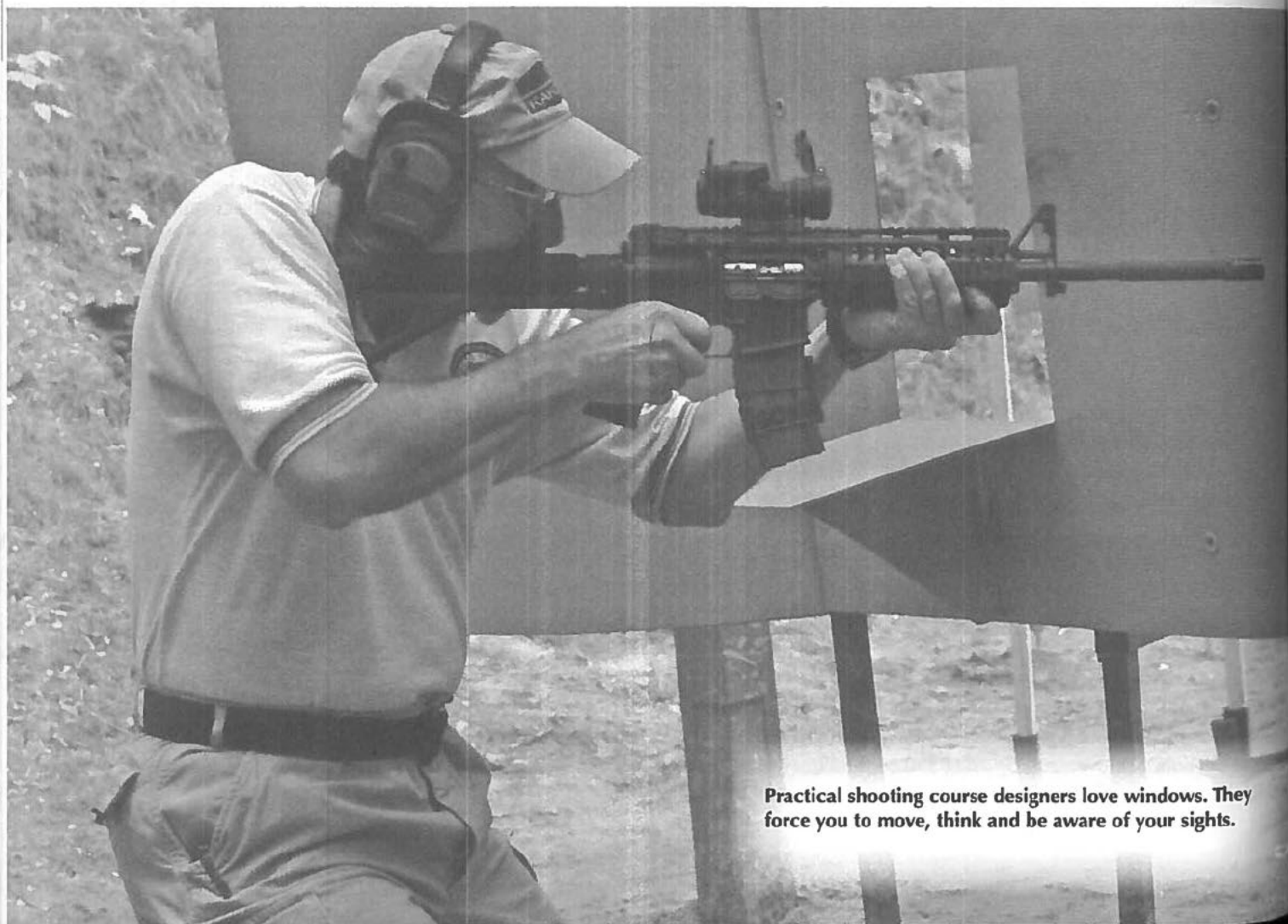
Competition With The AR-15

When it comes to any form of shooting competition, there are the old divisions, and the new ones. I'd like to suggest different ones. As far as competitions with the AR are concerned, there are four: Benchrest, short-range run and gun, long-range run and gun, and NRA High Power. A fifth type of competition is also a type of hunting: varmint shooting.

The rules of these competitions are varied, and just because a particular rifle is allowed in one, does not mean it is allowed in others. Some competitions don't care. If you want to show up to a High Power match with a 16-inch tele-stocked shorty, no one will tell you "No." Your scores won't be very impressive, but you might learn a few things. Like, shooting a shorty offhand at a bull's-eye 200 yards away is even harder than it looks. And that the shorter sight radius of the shorty



If you use iron sights, you need a means of adjusting them. To adjust the front, you need this tool. Get it. If you loan it, don't let the borrower walk away with it.



Practical shooting course designers love windows. They force you to move, think and be aware of your sights.

is not helpful when trying to shoot 600 yards. Likewise, if you show up at a USPSA Three-Gun match with an 18-pound DCM Service Rifle gun, your scores are likely to suffer. As in, trying to sprint to the next box while carrying the heavyweight you brought, and reload your magazines while holding up the rifle one-handed, is no fun.

Benchrest

Most gun clubs have some sort of benchrest competition, even if they don't have a full-house benchrest setup. The full, formal benchrest competition you may be aware of calls for a level of precision that seems to require zen-like abilities. Serious competitors will shoot groups at 100 yards where the distance center to center of the two holes farthest apart is less than two-tenths of an inch. The aggregate, or compiled score of groups fired at 100 and 200 yards, can be under half an inch. The rifles used are single-shot, machined to incredible tolerances, and use specially prepared brass used in that rifle, and that rifle only. The groups are fired off of the bench (hence "benchrest" shooting) using supports on stock and forearm. All serious competitors use various gadgets to estimate the wind direction and velocity, and account for it when firing. (Some "Account for it" by waiting for the conditions to settle down, and then firing their five-shot group in less than a minute.)

Enter the AR shooters. The groups are not quite as small, but are single-hole groups. At the club level, you may not be shooting for smallest group size, you may be shooting for score on a bull's-eye target. But in all cases you'll be shooting as accurately as possible.

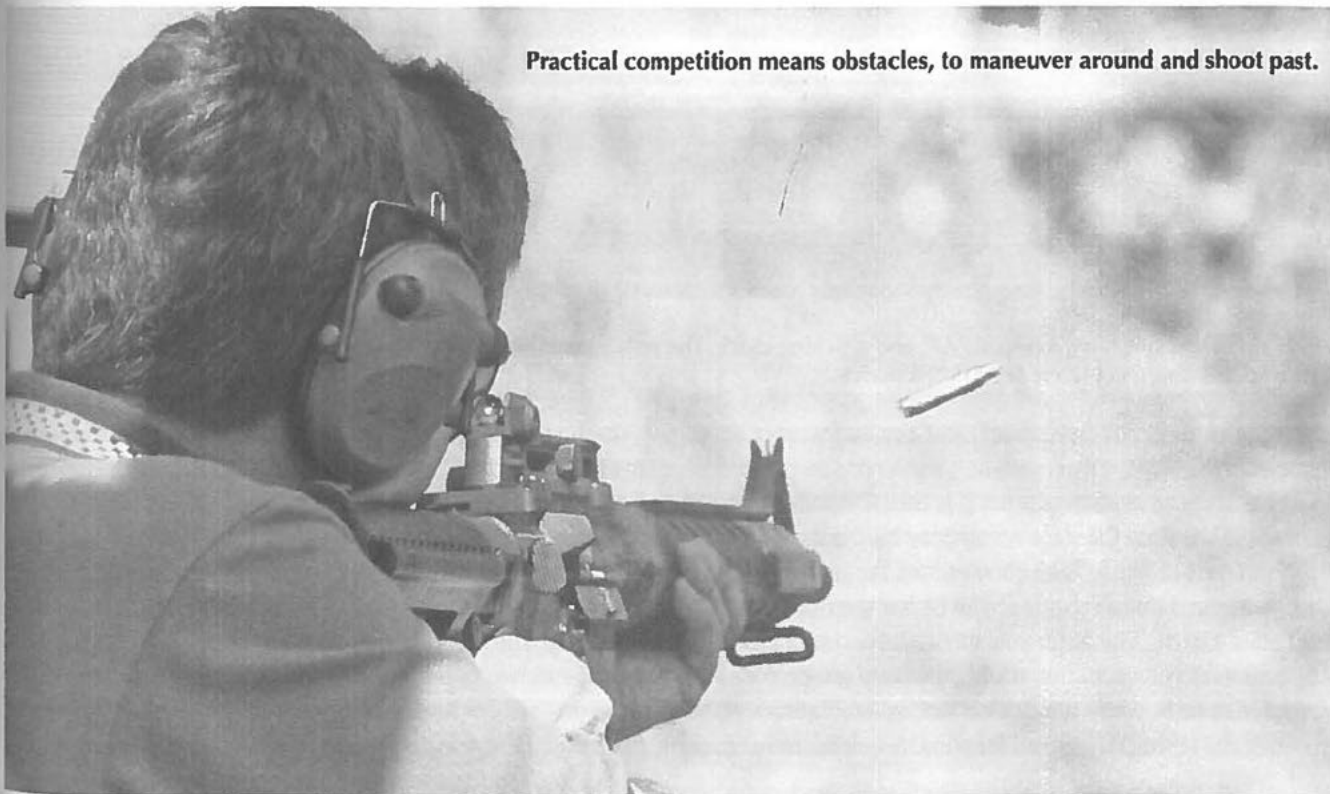
Short-range Run And Gun

Mostly, you'll find USPSA Three-Gun competition, and a group of single-match organized tactical rifle competitions. The USPSA is a National organizing body, and if you go to an approved or sanctioned USPSA event you will find the rules are the same. Unless there are local rules for safety, or you happen to have crossed into a state with some onerous restrictions, like 10-shot magazines. By short-range, I do not mean that you are only shooting short distances, but in many cases that is what you'll be doing. There are a great many ranges where the longest distance you can shoot is only 100 or 200 yards. Now, for a handgun shooter, 200 yards seems like a long way. In rifle shooting it is no big deal. No, the "short" in short range run and gun refers to the distance you will travel. A long field course in the short-range run stages will have you traveling 50 yards. You'll go from one box or port to another, shooting at targets as you go, but you not run very far.

USPSA

Three-Gun grew out of USPSA/IPSC handgun competition. The targets are the same buff cardboard, and where the club has steel that can take the impact, steel plates. Some clubs or matches will have separate handgun, rifle and shotgun stages. Others will have "multi-gun" stages where you may be required to fire two or even all three in the conduct of a single stage. A match is a collection of stages. Each stage is fired separately, and the scores for each stage are ranked only in that stage. Then the stage percentages are totaled, (the actual scoring, stage weighing, calculations and ranking system

Practical competition means obstacles, to maneuver around and shoot past.



COMPETITION WITH THE AR-15



Sometimes you'll start with your AR on a table, or on a rack.



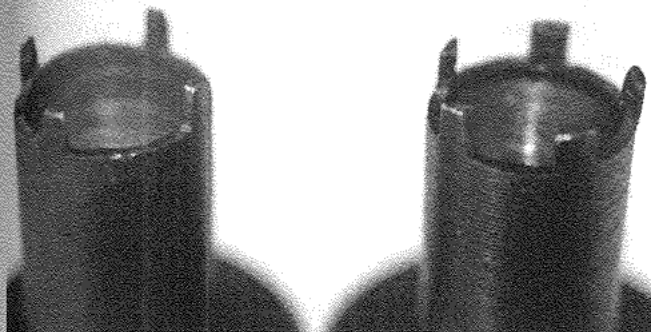
Fresh air, bright sunshine, a reliable AR, and a ticking clock. The only other thing you need is good competition and camaraderie. You'll get those at a USPSA match.

is worthy of the term "Byzantine") and a match winner declared.

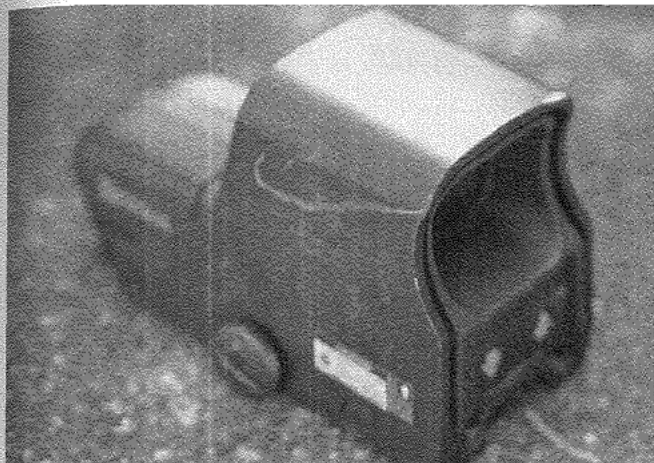
The simple explanation of scoring is this: the points you earn while shooting the stage are divided by the time it took you from start to finish. Each shooter fires the stage in turn, with scores and times recorded. The higher your points total, the better you do. The faster you shoot, the better you do. Any problems you encounter during the stage are problems you have to solve while the clock is ticking. And misses or shooting the wrong targets call for penalties, deductions from your points total.

In the rifle portion of the competition, and the match overall, there are three categories of equipment; Open, Tactical, and Limited or Standard.

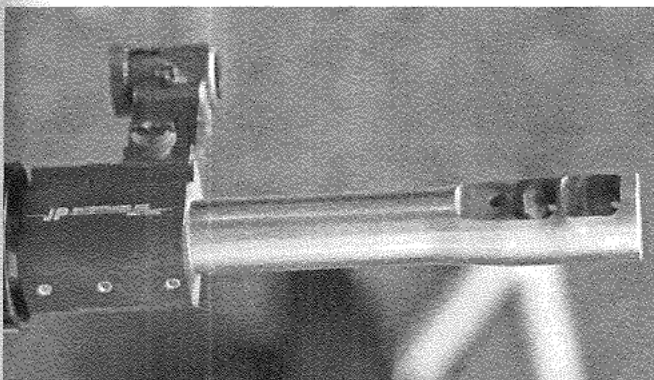
An Open rifle has pretty much no restrictions on it. Any caliber, any size, any capacity magazine, any sights. You can have a compensator, bipod, GPS unit, laser designator, etc. Anything. The "typical" Open gun is one with a compensator, bipod, and two optics: a magnifying optic for longer shots, and irons or a red-dot for the close targets. You may engage targets in a stage, or in a match, from 5 yards out to the longest distance the club can manage. Most clubs have a 100-yard



Some sights have four positions, some five. Be sure which your rifle has before you get a tool. Ah heck, get both, they're not that expensive.



An excellent sight such as this EOTech Holographic Sight moves you out of Limited Division. You can shoot Tactical or Open.



As exotic as this sight is, it is still an iron sight, and allowed in Limited USPSA. It won't fly as a Service Rifle in NRA High Power, though.

range. Some have much more, but you will be hard-pressed to find many shots out past 300 yards. Partly because not many clubs have that much room, and partly because it is so hard to run a match quickly with targets that far out. (If they are scored, someone has to go out there and call the score and patch the holes. Steel targets speed things up.) A 300-yard target can be difficult with iron sights, but a telescopic sight makes the shooting much easier and faster.

A Limited or Standard rifle cannot have optics. It cannot have a bipod. It is allowed a compensator, but only one no

larger than 1 inch in diameter and no longer than 3 inches. Why a comp, but no optics? The AWB/94. Rifles could not be made with flash hiders. But they could be made with compensators. Many rifles thus left the factory with compensators silver-soldered on the muzzle. Rather than require competitors remove them, the USPSA simply allowed their use. And in the old days, the division was simple: optics made it open, and irons were the default, or Standard configuration. You can have a very tricked-out rifle that is still a "Limited" or "Standard" rifle. It just can't have optics or a bipod.

A Tactical rifle is one that otherwise meets Limited rules, but has a single optical or red-dot sight on it. Tactical came about due to two things: the recognition that in real life (see any photograph from Iraq) IPSC has made its mark: optics are viewed as real-life relevant. And two, other Three-gun competitions had been allowing their use in otherwise tactically relevant rifles. So, rather than restrict participation, USPSA decided to make it more open.

In USPSA Three-Gun competition, the highest level of any three guns is the level you compete in. That is, if you shoot an Open rifle, but have a shotgun and handgun that are in "Limited" your overall score will be in Open. Your shotgun and handgun scores will be compared or listed in the partial results in their respective equipment divisions, but your overall score will be Open. By the same token, if you shoot an Open handgun, and a Limited rifle, you're in Open for the overall.

There are other Three-gun matches like the Mystery Mountain, the DPMS Tri-Gun, or the North Carolina Tactical. A quick web search will give you the dates, locations, and current rules of those matches. While the USPSA is a national organization, and the rules will be similar if not identical in all clubs shooting USPSA matches, the individual matches can vary from year to year. You really should peruse their current rules (and even find new matches) on the web.

Long-range

In long-range events, we have matches that have some farther distance shooting, but primarily have long distances to cover. The big match as the exemplar is the team tactical put on by D&L Sports each year. You and a partner will leave the start line carrying all your gear. You'll have handguns, water, lunch, one of you will have a carbine (such as an AR built to SPR specs) and the other will have a sniper rifle. You have a maximum time to hike to the firing position (which could be a mile away). Once there, you locate and engage all targets on the clock. You then saddle up and hike to the next firing position. Each leg is timed and scored, and each shooting problem is timed and scored.

Such a match is not for the faint of heart or weak of back or knees. You'll do a lot of walking, a bunch of shooting, and learn a whole lot about your shooting skills, stamina and your gear.

Unique Mike Gibson

And then there is the extravaganza: the Mike Gibson Ironman Marathon. Again, the rules change over time, and the requirements with them. But the basics are the same: the maximum amount of shooting possible. In a USPSA club match, you might shoot three or four stages, with a combined total of handgun, shotgun and rifle ammunition between 100 and 200 rounds. At the MGM, you can approach that in one stage. It is like the American Handgunner Shoot-off in that regard: you can go to the MGM Ironman and shoot a couple of thousand rounds. It is possible to risk burning out the barrel in your AR. Check Mike's web page for the latest info and dates.

NRA High Power

These are the traditional, cast-in-stone, long-range bull's-eye shooting match with rifles. The real course calls for scored shots fired offhand slowfire at 200 yards, sitting rapid-fire at 200 yards, prone rapid-fire at 300 yards, and prone slow-fire at 600 yards. How slow is slow? At 200 yards, it is 10 minutes for 10 shots. Plenty slow. But then, the bull's-eye is not very big. The sitting rapid-fire is also not easy. First, you start standing, and can't go sitting until the targets appear.

Then, you have 60 seconds to fire 10 shots. Oh yes, you have to reload, too. Those shooting the Service Rifle category start with two rounds in the rifle, and then reload with eight more. All others load five and five. At 300 yards, you get a generous 10 extra seconds. But, you have to start standing, and still have to reload. At 600 yards, the shooting is slow-fire again, 20 shots in 20 minutes. All the slow-fire shooting is done by single-loading the rifle.

Wow. Anyone who can do all that, and produce a decent score, certainly knows how to shoot a rifle. But it is far more specialized than other competitions. There is no movement, there is no way to make up a bad shot, and for some there just isn't enough shooting. It is possible to shoot in a match where the volume of shooting is increased, and instead of a 50-shot course you fire 80 or 100 rounds. But compared to a USPSA match, where there could well be over 100 rounds of rifle, and then shotgun and handgun as well, it is a lot of work for (in the view of some shooters) not a lot of shooting.

In NRA High Power, there are two equipment divisions: Service and Match. A Service rifle is an M-16A2 clone. You must have the rifle built so it has "no external changes" from an issue M-16A2. But the "no external" part allows for a whole lot of differences. And potential expense. First, the



Ted Puente, with a high-zoot USPSA Limited Division gun: iron sights, Redi-mag, comp, tactical forend with vertical grip. He shoots as good as the rifle looks, too.



A rack of guns, one squad at a club match. If you want to see what is hot, what is happening, and what to get, get yourself to a USPSA 3-gun match and start asking questions.

Carts to haul gear are the newest rage at Three-gun matches. With three guns, ammo, magazines and the rest to haul, why not?



barrel. Instead of a 1/7 chrome-lined, serious Service rifle competitors will have a very expensive, match 1/8, stainless barrel with a match and not 5.56 chamber. A hand-lapped, precision-chambered barrel, installed in your Service rifle, can quickly eat up a handful of hundred-dollar bills. (Start with a barrel blank from Krieger or Shilen, (nearly \$300) then turn it over to a gunsmith who finishes lathe-turning it, reams/a chamber, installs a barrel extension, installs a front sight housing, then headspaces, fits a bolt, and installs the whole thing in an upper, and you'll eat up just as much again. A Service rifle, while it must have a trigger pull heavy enough to satisfy the rules, will have a two-stage trigger for the cleanest possible pull while holding a 4.5-pound weight. (Add another couple hundred dollars.) The barrel is free-floated, so the handguards cover a steel free-float tube. The sights are often hand-fitted, and have been re-machined to offer quarter-minute click adjustments instead of the standard, coarser adjustments on a rack-grade M-16A2. Then, many competitors will add lead weights fore and aft to balance the rifle while making it as heavy as possible. A top-grade Service rifle can tip the scales at 18 pounds, and have cost the owner two grand or more. The DoubleStar DCM rifle tested is a perfect example of just what a competitor in the Service category uses.

The match rifle differs in a few regards. The main#8251 that you need not hide anything. So the barrel is free-floating in a tube handguard. Optics aren't allowed in some sub-divisions, so the iron sights are parked out on the end of a hollow tube installed on the barrel itself. The extension, called a "bloop tube" from the sound it often generates, exists simply to get the front sight out as far as possible. The stock is adjustable for length of pull, cheekpiece height, buttplate angle and drop, and the trigger weight is allowed to be lighter than that of a Service rifle. To avoid getting the charging handle banged against (or stopped by) the cheekpiece, the bolt is machined, and the upper as well, to allow for an operating handle bolted directly on the carrier itself. The bolt hold open is extended, so the shooter can manipulate it when prone without having to take his left hand out of the sling.

If you thought the Service rifle, or a USPSA Open rifle was expensive, then you haven't priced an over-the-course Match rifle. For a look at a Match rifle, check out the Fulton Armory match rifle tested.

Varmint Shooting

There is no organizing body, no book of rules, and no national scoring method. There are simply the hunting regulations, and the score you and your buddies keep that day, weekend or season. The plan is simple: You get a license, if needed. You find a farmer or rancher who has a problem with burrowing rodents of some kind. You approach him

about solving or at least easing his problem. Once you have permission, you go to the site and settle on a safe firing direction. You and your buddies then drag your gear out of your trucks and set up on a convenient hill or ridgeline. There you proceed to shoot all members of the family Rodentia who are unwise enough to appear.

Scoring is whatever you and your buddies agree to: ratio of hits to misses, total hits, longest hit, whatever.

In the interests of greatest accuracy and painless and instantaneous demise, you load your ammo (or buy factory) that uses hollow-point bullets. In the interests of building a good relationship with the farmer or rancher, and making sure you can count on getting a "Yes" answer to future requests, you clean up all your brass, leave no trash, and refrain from indulging in victory donuts in the pasture with your truck when you produce the highest score.

Competition shooting not only tests the shooters and their rifles, but their gear as well. Short of a shooting war, you can't do more testing, nor find the faults with rifles and gear, like you can in a rigorous competition. Competition is what brought us rock-solid 1911 pistols, and it brought us optics, rails, handguards and other improvements in ARs. And it produces spectacular shooting skills. If you want to be a better shooter, don't spend all your time at the range plinking with your buddies. Swallow some of your pride, spend a bit of time and money, and shoot some competition.

Varminting requires long-range precision. There are no time limits, just hits or misses.



EXHIBIT 13

.308 CALIBER POWER & PERFORMANCE

ARMALITE® QUALITY & VALUE

.308 CALIBER AR-10(T)™

- Our top of the line, superb accuracy
- 24" Stainless Steel T Heavy barrel
- Now also available in .243 caliber!

.308 CALIBER AR-10A2™

- Our rugged and accurate tactical model
- Reliable, accurate and hard hitting
- Forged A2 upper with 20" chrome HBAR

.308 CALIBER AR-10A4™ CARBINE

- Forged A4 upper with 16" chrome lined barrel
- Featuring our new, longer carbine handguard!
- Picatinny rail for maximum flexibility in sighting devices

Each of our AR-10™ rifles and carbines comes with two 10 round magazines, owners manual and lifetime warranty. We offer a complete line of .223, .243 and .308 caliber rifles, carbines, parts and accessories plus the innovative AR-50™ .50 caliber rifle. Send \$2 or your FFL for our complete catalog:

ARMALITE, INC. P.O. Box 299, Geneseo, IL 61254 • 309-944-6939, Fax 309-944-6949
Secure Online Ordering: www.armalite.com

HANDGUNS

AT YOUR NEWSSTAND NOW

MEET THE ULTIMATE HUNTING COMPANION.



From two of the biggest names in the outdoors comes the ultimate sportsman's package—the Leer® Special Edition Browning® truck cap. Available for a limited time only, the Browning cap comes complete with a lock box for guns, fishing rods, and other valuables; Browning/Leer graphics; clothing rack; headliner; Yakima roof rack; Browning Signature Cargo Bag; 14mm Rechargeable Ballistic Lite™; and a Browning/Leer fleece vest. To learn more, call 800-967-5337 (ext. 1973) or visit www.leer.com.

LEER
www.leer.com

BROWNING
www.browning.com

GUNSMOKE

nating frame wear.

These pins are all hardened, centerless ground, and turned .0015-inch oversize (from the originals) for a more positive fit. They are available blued or in highly polished stainless steel. Easy installation instructions come with each pin.

The Colt base pin—which fits all generations—has a head flange that is slightly larger than standard and has a relief cut for clearance of the barrel. This flange prevents rotation of the pin in the frame—a cause of frame wear in Colt sixguns. The Colt pin is turned to .2515-inch diameter and retains the external (forward portion) appearance of a genuine Colt part.

There are three styles offered for Ruger

The Colt base pin—which fits all generations—has a head flange that is slightly larger than standard and has a relief cut for clearance of the barrel.

single actions (including the Old and New Model Blackhawk, Super Blackhawk, Vaquero, Sheriff's Model Vaquero, Bisley and Single Six). These pins feature either a knurled head, or two types of standard heads, and are ground to .2495-inch diameter. Ruger pins have an Allen set screw in the head to hold the pin in place.

Belt Mountain's latest model is the No. 5 Base Pin, patterned along the lines of the base pin that the late Elmer Keith designed for his famed No. 5 Single Action Colt, back in 1927. Since then, Keith's SA has been a favorite for sixgunners to copy. This base pin, is constructed with concentric layers of increasingly larger and smaller discs (forming an hourglass head shape), and an Allen set screw adjustment for a positive fit. It is a sure-fire handsome pin for those who want to dress up about any Colt or Ruger single action. The pin's large head also permits a solid grip for easy removal when the gun is dirty, or in cold weather—when cold fingers make just about any simple chore difficult.

Cylinder base pins for Colt or Ruger revolvers make good sense and they retail for \$21.95 postpaid, while the No. 5 Model (which fits either) sells for \$24.95 postpaid. For more information, or ordering, contact Belt Mountain Enterprises, Dept. GA, Box 4202, Bozeman, MT 59772, or call (406) 388-1396.

EXHIBIT 14



AMMOLAND
SHOOTING SPORTS NEWS

**WMD
GUNS**

PERFORMANCE
FIREARMS

CLICK HERE ►



≡ MENU

[Home](#) » [Shooting Industry News](#)

New Industry Statistics Underscore Popularity of “America’s Rifle” – 16,069,000!?

Ammoland Inc. Posted on September 25, 2018 by NRAHQ

Opinion



New Industry Statistics Underscore Popularity of “America’s Rifle”

Fairfax, VA – ~~-(Ammoland.com)-~~ Senator Dianne Feinstein has spent the last 26 years pushing gun control at the federal level and earlier this month demonstrated her willingness to distort facts and Supreme Court precedent in her ongoing effort to restrict your Second Amendment rights.

During a confirmation hearing for President Trump's latest Supreme Court nominee, **Feinstein ludicrously claimed** that semiautomatic rifles like the AR-15 – long heralded as “America's Rifle” – are not “in common use.”

We now have more than 16 million reasons to disagree with her.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the firearms industry trade association, **has calculated the number of semi-automatic rifles** – including AR and AK pattern rifle – produced (minus those exported) and imported in the U.S. on an annual basis between 1990 and 2016. During that time, there have been approximately 16,069,000 AR and AK semi-automatic rifles available for sale in the United States.

NSSF estimated that there were 2.3 million semi-automatic rifles manufactured or imported into the United States in 2016.

Their figures trace the growth of the market through the late 1990s and early 2000s, with 2009 ushering in a modern boom. There were more ARs and AKs produced in the U.S. in 2009 than there were produced *and* imported in 2008. The same is true of 2012, of 2013, and of 2014. Domestic production ebbed in 2014, but then rebounded strongly in 2015 and peaked in 2016.

Plotting these production numbers with recent control of Congress and the White House reveals an obvious pattern; one can see the impact of anti-gun politicians on spiking production numbers.

However, the market will only accommodate **what consumers want**, and we have seen **strong background check numbers** even as pro-gun allies won control of Congress and the White House. In 2017, there were more than five million NICS checks related to the sale of long guns and **more than 2.9 million through the end of August this year.**

The FBI doesn't split semi-automatic rifles out from other rifles or shotguns in the “long gun” category, but NSSF Senior Vice President Lawrence G. Keane told Guns.com that, **“Modern sporting rifles are the most commonly purchased rifle by Americans today.”**

Needless to say, there is nothing “reasonable” or moderate about banning what is literally the most popular class of rifles in America. And the relative infrequency with which any sort of rifle

(semiautomatic or not) is used in violent crime underscores the fact that the Americans who are buying these guns by the millions do so for lawful purposes.

In any case, the Supreme Court could not have been clearer in *Heller* that the arms protected by the Second Amendment depend on the choices of law-abiding Americans, not criminals.

And Americans have made their choice by elevating modern semi-automatic rifles to the top of the list.

About:

Established in 1975, the Institute for Legislative Action (ILA) is the "lobbying" arm of the National Rifle Association of America. ILA is responsible for preserving the right of all law-abiding individuals in the legislative, political, and legal arenas, to purchase, possess and use firearms for legitimate purposes as guaranteed by the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Visit: www.nra.org



7 thoughts on "New Industry Statistics Underscore Popularity of "America's Rifle" – 16,069,000!?"



tomcat says:

September 26, 2018 at 4:36 PM

Outlawing AR's is about as stupid as the Kavanue fight. There are way to many of them in existence and a lot of them are personally built guns, but the main thing is that people like the guns and they are functional and practical. The democrats would even consider busting everyone's door down and searching for one if they thought that would be possible. We are knee deep in a war

EXHIBIT 15

NEWS NAVIGATION ∨

NSSF: AR-15/AK NUMBERS TOP 16 MILLION

09/17/18 6:30 AM | by Chris Eger (<https://www.guns.com/news/author/chris-eger>)

Share 1



Numbers from the NSSF point to the likelihood that 16 million modern sporting rifles were produced between 1990 and 2016, a period that included the decade-long federal assault weapon ban. (Photo: Chris Eger)

The trade group for the firearms industry says that AR-15-style rifles and their competitors are among the most common in the country.

Figures researched by the National Shooting Sports Foundation show that just over 16 million semi-auto rifles (<http://www.guns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NSSF-MSR-Production-Estimates-2017.pdf>) such as AR-15s and AKs have been produced or imported into the country since 1990. Combing through figures from federal regulators and verifying the break out against companies who make selected semi-auto rifles with detachable magazines, termed modern sporting rifles (<https://www.nssf.org/msr/>) by the industry, the group says guns like the AR and AK are white hot with consumers.

"Modern sporting rifles remain the most commonly purchased rifle by Americans today," Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF senior vice president, told Guns.com.

Keane explained the guns are popular in large part due to the inherent modularity of such platforms, which provide the ability to customize them to fit the individual owner and the wide variety of needs they can fulfill.

"They are offered a wide variety of calibers and the design of the firearm allows beginners to quickly master safe

and accurate marksmanship skills,” he said. “Modern g rifles are the choice for millions of Americans for hunting, recreational target shooting and self-defense.”

Subject to a federal ban on “assault weapons” that ran from 1994 through 2004, the NSSF found that the number of MSRs dipped to a low of just 70,000 produced and imported in 1996, but has been climbing ever since. By 1998, even while the ban was in effect, the figure doubled to 145,000. By 2003, the last year of the ban, the numbers of guns broached 380,000. Five years later, with the election of President Obama, numbers hit 633,000. Then, in 2009, a solid 1 million. In 2013, following the Sandy Hook shooting in Newtown, Connecticut and a wave of gun control legislation both proposed and enacted: 2.3 million.

The estimate for 2016, working with the latest numbers available due which are stymied out of respect of industry confidentiality, are on par with 2013 figures — 2.3 million. For reference, U.S. manufacturers produced some 4.2 million rifles (<https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/docs/undefined/firearmscommercestatisticalupdate20185087-24-18pdf/download>) of all calibers and types in 2016.

The number of guns in circulation is a more ephemeral number as, while some have surely been scrapped, worn out, broken or otherwise retired, guns manufactured or imported before 1989 are not listed in the 16 million figure. Likewise, guns assembled from so-called “80 percent” lowers or kits by home builders are not tracked by the industry.

The debate over just how common ARs are has been a matter of legal contention at the federal level for several years.

In 2014, upholding Maryland’s strict new gun control laws, U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake ruled (<https://news.guns.com/2014/08/13/federal-judge-upholds-marylands-strict-gun-control-laws-calls-ar-15-dangerous-and-unusual/>) that AR-15 style rifles and others “fall outside Second Amendment protection as dangerous and unusual arms.” Blake went on to explain her reasoning that the then-estimated 8.2 million AR-15 and AK-47 based semi-automatic rifles known imported to or produced in the country between 1990 and 2012 represent “no more than 3 percent of the current civilian gun stock.” Even this, she maintained, was highly concentrated in an even smaller “1 percent” of the U.S. population.

In 2016, Blake’s ruling was reversed (<https://news.guns.com/2016/02/05/marylands-assault-weapon-ban-gets-riddled-on-appeal/>) by a three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals who held that the same figure of guns, coupled with an estimated 75 million magazines “are so common that they are standard” with Chief Judge William Byrd Traxler, Jr. going on to say, “In sum, semi-automatic rifles and LCMs [large capacity magazines] are commonly used for lawful purposes, and therefore come within the coverage of the Second Amendment.”

Nonetheless, Traxler’s ruling was later overturned (<https://news.guns.com/2017/08/29/21-states-join-supreme-court-challenge-to-maryland-assault-weapon-law/>) by a rare en banc panel of the entire court which stood behind the ban in a 10-4 ruling that the Supreme Court declined to review further.

The same year that Maryland's ban was upheld, U.S. Sen. Feinstein, D-Calif., grilled (https://news.guns.com/2017/03/22/judge-neil-gorsuch-addresses-2nd-amendment-heller-as-hearings-continue/) Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch on if AR-15s were in common use, or could be restricted as unusual, in line with the 2008 Heller case.

"In DC v. Heller, the majority opinion written by Justice Scalia recognized that — and I'm quoting, 'Of course the Second Amendment was not unlimited,' end quote. Justice Scalia wrote, 'For example, laws restricting access to guns by the mentally ill or laws forbidding gun possession in schools were consistent with the limited nature of the Second Amendment.' Justice Scalia also wrote that quote, 'Weapons that are most useful in military service, M16 rifles and the like, may be banned,' end quote without infringing on the Second Amendment," said Feinstein.

"Do you agree with that statement that under the Second Amendment weapons that are most useful in military service, M16 rifles and the like, may be banned?" she asked the nominee.

Gorsuch replied, saying, "Heller makes clear the standard that we judges are supposed to apply. The question is whether it's a gun in common use for self-defense and that may be subject to reasonable regulation. That's the test as I understand it. There's lots of ongoing litigation about which weapons qualify under those standards and I can't pre-judge that litigation."

Feinstein this month returned to the same argument (https://news.guns.com/2018/09/06/kavanaugh-on-2nd-amendment-semi-auto-rifles-are-in-common-use-videos/) with Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

"Most handguns are semi-automatic," Kavanaugh said. "And the question came before us of semi-automatic rifles and the question was, 'Can you distinguish as a matter of precedent?' Again, this is all about precedent for me, trying to read exactly what the Supreme Court said and if you read the McDonald case. And I concluded that it could not be distinguished as a matter of law, semi-automatic rifles from semi-automatic handguns. And semi-automatic rifles are widely possessed in the United States. There are millions and millions and millions of semi-automatic rifles that are possessed. So that seemed to fit common use and not being a dangerous and unusual weapon."

In the end, Feinstein concluded that "By arguing that AR-15s can't be regulated, Brett Kavanaugh made crystal clear that he's to the right of Justice Scalia on guns," she said on social media after the hearing. "Even pro-gun Justice Scalia knew the 2nd Amendment did not protect all weapons in his opinion in Heller."

14 Comments

Guns.com

 Login Recommend Tweet Share

Sort by Best



Join the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS 

Name

EXHIBIT 16

M1 CARBINE



The M1 Carbine was designed primarily to offer noncombat and line-of-communications troops a better defensive weapon than a pistol or submachine gun, with greater accuracy and range, but without the recoil, cost, or weight of a full-power infantry rifle. The carbine was also easier for less experienced soldiers and smaller-framed people to fire than the .30 caliber infantry rifles of the day. The carbine was more convenient to carry for officers, NCOs, or specialists encumbered with weapons, field glasses, radios, or other gear. Tankers, drivers, artillery crews, mortar crews, and other personnel were also issued the M1 Carbine in lieu of the larger, heavier M1 Garand. Belatedly, a folding-stock version of the M1 Carbine was developed, after a request was made for a compact and light infantry arm for airborne troops. The first M1 Carbines were delivered in mid-1942, with

SHOOTING WITH ACCURACY ([HTTP://THECMP.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/CMP_CARBINE_NOTES_2007.PDF](http://thecmp.org/wp-content/uploads/cmp_carbine_notes_2007.pdf))

SHOOTING TIPS ([HTTP://THECMP.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/CCSHOOTINGTIPS.PDF](http://thecmp.org/wp-content/uploads/ccshootingtips.pdf))

30 ROUND MAGAZINE ([HTTP://THECMP.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/CARBINE_30_ROUND_MAGAZINES_SEPTEMBER_2007.PDF](http://thecmp.org/wp-content/uploads/carbine_30_round_magazines_september_2007.pdf))

ASSEMBLY & DISASSEMBLY ([HTTP://THECMP.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/M1CARBINEDISASSEMBLY.PDF](http://thecmp.org/wp-content/uploads/m1carbinedisassembly.pdf))

MARKINGS INFORMATION ([HTTP://THECMP.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/CARBINE_PARTS_MARKING_INFORMATION.PDF](http://thecmp.org/wp-content/uploads/carbine_parts_marking_information.pdf))

REAR SIGHT - ZEROING PROBLEMS ([HTTP://THECMP.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/CC-ZEROINGPROBLEMSWITHADJREARSIGHT.PDF](http://thecmp.org/wp-content/uploads/cc-zeroingproblemswithadjrearsight.pdf))

initial priority given to troops in the European theatre of war.

Due to limited quantities we may come across, M1 Carbines, M1Carbine barreled Receivers, Bavaria-Marked M1 Carbines and M1A1 Paratrooper Carbines will be offered on the CMP Auction Site HERE. (<http://cmpauction.thecmp.org/>)

Each M1 Carbine rifle sold by CMP is an authentic U.S. Government rifle that has been inspected, headspaced, repaired if necessary and test fired for function. Each rifle is shipped with safety manual and chamber safety flag.

Free S&H - continental U.S. Contact CMP for additional S&H - Alaska, Hawaii & Puerto Rico

NOTE: Carbines will not be sold or shipped with magazines, slings or oilers.

EXHIBIT 17

The Trace

March 25, 2019



[Samuel
Corum/Getty]

ASK THE TRACE

How Many Assault Weapons Do Americans Own?

A seemingly simple reader question about military-style rifles exposes disputed definitions and gaping holes in government record-keeping.

by **Alex Yablon** · @AlexYablon · September 22, 2018

Assault weapons loom large in the American gun debate. To their foes, they are the tool of mass murderers, made infamous at Sandy Hook, San Bernardino, Las Vegas, and Parkland. To their fans, guns like the AR-15 are versatile, customizable, and uniquely fun to shoot.

So it's reasonable to wonder: How many assault-style rifles do Americans actually own?

The answer is much more than trivia. Courts assess the popularity of the weapons when deciding whether politicians can ban them.

That makes it all the more frustrating that there is no way to know precisely how many of these rifles exist in the United States. The numbers are hazy for two main reasons: There's no official criteria for what qualifies as an "assault rifle," and the government doesn't keep detailed data on the different types of firearms owned by Americans.

Some gun experts insist that the term "assault rifle" only refers to a very specific set of weapons: those that are fed ammunition from a detachable magazine, and can switch between semiautomatic and fully automatic fire, a capability known as "select fire." By that narrow standard, the number of assault rifles in private hands is very small.

The National Firearms Act of 1934 required owners of fully automatic guns to register the weapons with the federal government. Since 1986, Congress has forbidden gunmakers from producing fully automatic

#8266
weapons for the civilian market, leaving machine gunners to collect older models, and then register them. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, there are roughly 638,000 machine guns in circulation in the United States, a number that includes both assault rifles like the M16 and more novel products, like the Uzi submachine gun.

But most laws regulating “assault weapons” use a broader definition that some experts say is overly broad. California, Washington, D.C., New York, and five other states have regulations that typically apply to any magazine-fed, semiautomatic rifle that incorporates other design features, which can include a second grip to stabilize the weapon while firing, a rack for mounting accessories, or a muzzle that suppresses the explosive flash of each discharged round. Many of these accessories are mostly for aesthetics, to evoke a combat or “tactical” vibe.

We’re going to use the broader definition of assault weapons here, because it covers the guns that have become familiar to Americans in the last two decades.

One of the most cited estimates of the number of assault-style rifles produced comes from the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the gun industry’s largest trade group. The NSSF does not use the term “assault rifle,” but tracks the production of “modern sporting rifles,” which typically refers to semiautomatic rifles like the AR-15. According to a 2015 report by the trade group, roughly one in 10 guns produced each year is a modern sporting rifle. In raw numbers, American gunmakers produced and imported 8.5 million such rifles between 1990 and 2012, and about one and two million annually every year since.

Do the math and it works out to between 15 and 20 million modern sporting rifles now in circulation. (An important note: The NSSF report includes weapons produced for law enforcement.)

Scholars who have researched American gun ownership treat the industry’s estimates with some skepticism. “The NSSF gave no methodology,” noted Aaron Karp, a lecturer at Old Dominion University who studies the international small arms trade. “None of these numbers are great.”

And it’s important to put the NSSF estimate in context. Americans have purchased almost as many assault rifles as they have Nintendo Switch video game consoles, or copies of the book How To Win Friends And Influence People — successful products that are nonetheless nowhere near household items.

Nonetheless, according to CNN, the AR-15 is now perhaps the most popular single model of rifle in the country. And the overall number of assault-style weapons in the United States is not just an academic matter: the constitutionality of gun bans rests on their historic popularity.

In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that the Second Amendment protects an individual’s right to own guns. Justice Antonin Scalia used his majority opinion to lay out a threshold for the regulation of firearms, arguing that the government cannot prohibit guns “in common use.” Longstanding firearm restrictions like the National Firearms Act are therefore okay, because they do not affect weapons owned by a large number of people.

Last year, an appellate court used the logic Scalia deployed in *Heller* to rule that modern assault rifles like the AR-15 and AK-47 are also not protected by the Second Amendment, because the weapons are not “in common use.” The decision upheld Maryland’s assault weapons law. Attorneys for the state noted that such guns comprise only 3 percent of the total civilian arsenal of approximately 310 million firearms, citing a 2012 Congressional Research Service report.

Unsurprisingly, conservative judges have disagreed. Years before his nomination to the Supreme Court, Brett Kavanaugh argued in a 2010 dissent to a case brought before the D.C. Court of Appeals that longstanding bans on machine guns only apply to fully automatic weapons never widely used by civilians.

Assessing these bans based on their brief history, however, obscures a key fact: When legislatures first restricted the guns, few civilians owned them. Americans only started buying assault weapons in large numbers after the federal assault weapon ban expired in 2004. That year, there were only about 100,000 made by American manufacturers. Production skyrocketed after Barack Obama won the 2008 election, when domestic gunmakers manufactured almost 500,000 such weapons, and then again following the

Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. In 2013^{#8267} industry pumped out nearly two million assault-style rifles.

Bans on assault weapons may not be “longstanding” in the eyes of conservatives like Kavanaugh. But civilian ownership of assault weapons is also a recent phenomenon.

*Vote on the next question we should answer at **Ask The Trace**.*

What Should We Investigate Next?

We will be opening our next voting round soon. Check back!

powered by [Hearken](#)

× Close

EXHIBIT 18

Health +

Live TV



How an 'ugly,' unwanted weapon became the most popular rifle in America

By [David Heath](#), Elise Hansen and [AJ Willingham](#), CNN

Design: Joyce Tseng, CNN

Updated 10:27 AM ET, Thu December 14, 2017

(CNN) — Larry Hyatt had never seen such a frenzy.

The lines at Hyatt Guns, his shop in Charlotte, North Carolina, snaked out the door. The deep, green-walled warehouse bills itself as the largest gun shop in America, but even then Hyatt had to stretch to meet the demand.

At one point, he dispatched 37 salespeople to man the cash registers. He put up velvet ropes and hired a police officer. He even put a hot dog stand outside.

It was just after [the Sandy Hook massacre](#) -- and customers were lined up to buy AR-15 semi-automatic rifles, like the one the shooter Adam Lanza used.

Mass shootings, rather than temper gun sales, only feed the hunger.

That the boom in business happened after one of the most heinous mass shootings in American history was no

By using this site, you agree to our updated [Privacy Policy](#) and our [Terms of Use](#).

And AR-15 style rifles have become a favorite among ^{#8270}shooters, used in some of the most notorious and deadly mass killings in recent history: [Aurora](#), [Vegas](#), [Texas](#), [San Bernardino](#).

This is the story of how media hysteria and failed policy; industry pressures and consumer demand; blood and money helped turn an ugly, unwanted semi-automatic rifle into the most popular rifle in America.

How a weapon of war was born

History of the modern assault-style rifle 01:40

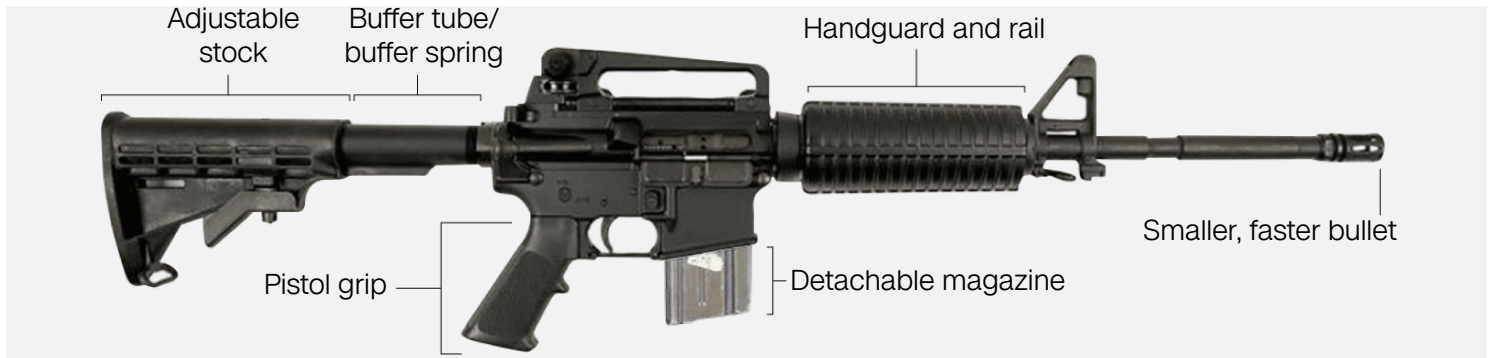
The AR-15's journey into the hands of gun enthusiasts and mass murderers alike started in the jungles of Vietnam. It was the 1960s, and the landscape of warfare had changed. In Vietnam, rather than clear-cut enemy lines, combatants were fighting in close combat in city streets and dense forests. Viet Cong guerillas and North Vietnamese soldiers carried AK-47s. The US Army needed its own answer.

Enter the AR-15, developed for military use by Armalite, an arms company from which the gun takes its name ("AR" stands for "[Armalite Rifle](#)").

The rifle combined rapid fire with a lighter weight. It replaced higher-caliber bullets with lighter ammunition that made up in speed what it lacked in size.

What makes a typical AR-15?

Not all AR-15s are the same and features may vary as they are highly adjustable and customizable, but on a typical model you may see:



Source: National Shooting Sports Foundation; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Rather than relying on marksmanship, the AR-15 used rapid fire. The lightweight rifle maximized its kill rate by raking enemy soldiers with high-velocity rounds. As the original designers [explained](#), the speed of the impact causes the bullet to tumble after it penetrates tissue, creating catastrophic injuries.

Armalite didn't manage to sell the gun to the military. [Faced with money woes](#), it instead sold the rights to Colt Industries in 1959.

Colt was more successful in its efforts, and in 1962, Congress authorized an initial purchase of 8,500 AR-15s for testing. The fully automatic version--capable of being set to semi-automatic--was given a new name for military use: the M-16.

It became the standard-issue rifle during the Vietnam War.

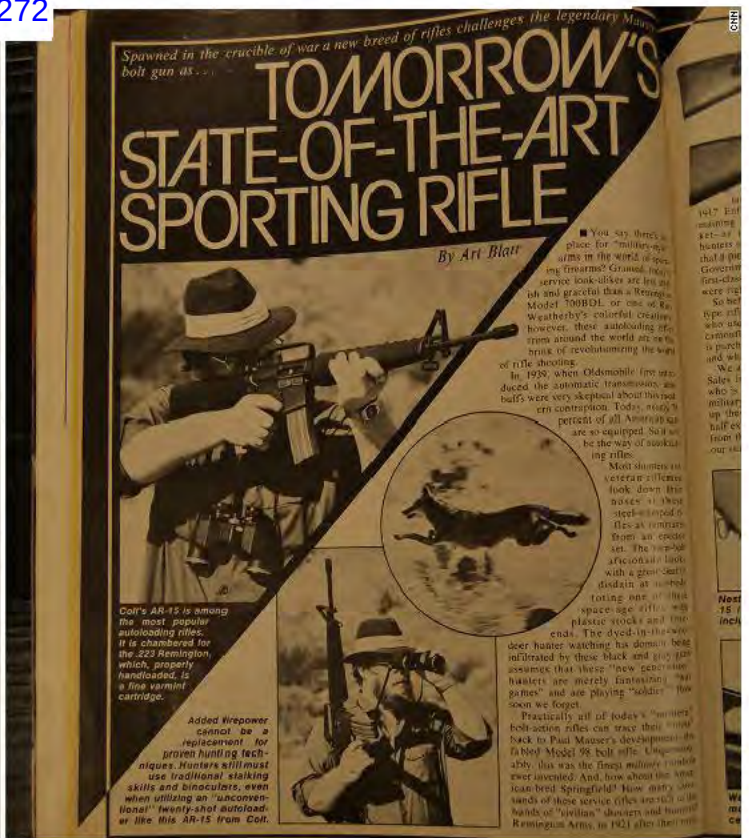
How it was marketed to civilians

Not long after it started selling M-16s to the military, Colt began marketing the semi-automatic AR-15 to civilians. The company gave it the gentler name of the "Sporter," [and described it as a hunting rifle](#).

But the gun, designed for close, confusing combat, was not an immediate hit. In the eyes of many gun enthusiasts, the "black rifle" -- as it was nicknamed -- was ugly and expensive.

"To its champions, the AR-15 was an embodiment of fresh thinking. Critics saw it as an ugly little toy," wrote C.J. Chivers in his book, "The Gun."

In July 1981, the fan magazine Guns and Ammo waxed eloquent about the Sporter's unappealing reputation.



"Most shooters and veteran riflemen look down their noses at these steel-stamped rifles as remnants from an erector set. The turn-bolt aficionado looks with a great deal of disdain at anybody toting one of these space-age rifles with plastic stocks and fore-ends. The dyed-in-the-wool deer hunter watching his domain being infiltrated by these black and gray guns assumes that these 'new generation' hunters are merely fantasizing 'war games' and are playing 'soldier.'"

Instead, the gun was mainly sold to law enforcement and other narrower demographics -- notably, "survivalists" who imagined they would one day face combat situations in an apocalyptic future, according to Tom Diaz, a gun expert and author of "Making a Killing: The Business of Guns in America."

How a mass shooting made it a celebrity



A couple leaves the Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, California, with their children after a gunman shot and killed five students and then turned the gun on himself.

On a dark day in 1989, the public awoke to the notion that civilians could own semi-automatic rifles.

On January 17 of that year, a 24-year-old **drifter** wearing combat clothes and a flak jacket **walked up** to his old grade-school playground in Stockton, California, and pumped bullets on a crowd of children with his AK-47 rifle, a semi-automatic version that had been imported from China.

Within minutes, Patrick Edward Purdy squeezed the trigger at least 106 times. He then aimed a pistol to his head and pulled the trigger one last time. **Five children** lay dead; 29 other children and one teacher were **wounded**.

The massacre was so horrifying, Colt Industries, then the manufacturer of the competing AR-15, did something unfathomable today. It **suspended** civilian sales of the AR-15 **for a year** while the Bush administration weighed whether to ban the weapon.

“

Before Stockton, most people didn't even know you could buy those guns.

— CHRIS BARTOCCI, A FORMER COLT'S EMPLOYEE AND AUTHOR OF *BLACK RIFLE II*

Chris Bartocci, a former Colt employee and author of the book "Black Rifle II," says it was the first time many in the general public had heard about the availability of such weapons.

"Before Stockton, most people didn't even know you ^{#8274}y those guns," he said. The media coverage, he said, helped glamorize semi-automatic rifles to the buying public. "This stuff has been around forever; this is not new technology."

The term "AR-15" is now considered a style of rifle, rather than a specific brand of one.

By 1990, Guns & Ammo reported that sales of the AR-15 were soaring, although that seems to have been a rather relative term. In 1990, Colt made only 36,000 Sporters for domestic use, [according to the Hartford Courant](#).

The patent on the AR-15 by then had expired, opening the door for several new competitors, which is why the term "AR-15" is now considered a [style](#) of rifle, rather than a specific brand of one.

How a ban increased demand

As the profile of the AR-15 rose, talk continued of banning "assault weapons," a term used by lawmakers to denote certain types of semi-automatic firearms. President George H.W. Bush, a lifetime NRA member, [proposed](#) banning all magazines holding more than 15 rounds.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton pushed the assault weapons ban through Congress with some bipartisan support. [Presidents Reagan, Carter and Ford co-authored a letter](#) to the House of Representatives expressing their support.

"This is a matter of vital importance to the public safety," it read. "We urge you to listen to the American public and to the law enforcement community and support a ban on the further manufacture of these weapons."

Hyatt, whose store was started by his father in 1959, recalled a surge in sales then, too.

There's something about human nature, he says. "You tell a man he can't have something and suddenly he wants 12."

“

You tell a man he can't have something and suddenly he wants 12.

— LARRY HYATT, OWNER OF HYATT GUNS

Ironically, the ban didn't do much to deter the production of the now-generic AR-15.

[Clinton's ban outlawed Colt's AR-15 by name](#). But the ban didn't cover versions of these weapons unless they had two of these purely cosmetic features: a folding stock, a bayonet mount, a "conspicuously protruding" pistol grip, a flash suppressor or a grenade launcher. Grenades aren't even legal to own.

61.3%

of total rifles sold in 2016 were
AR styles/modern sporting rifles.



Source: National Shooting Sports Foundation

"It makes no sense, banning something based on appearance," said Bartocci. "It's the same weapon; one just looks meaner."

Manufacturers quickly found a way to redesign around these constraints.

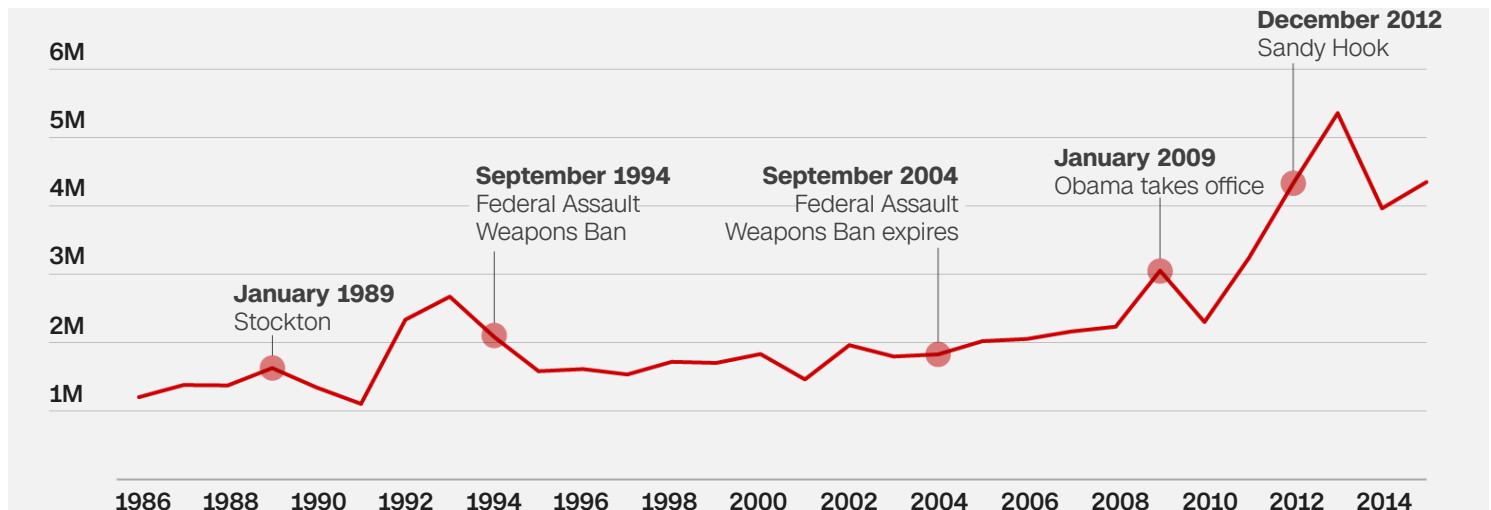
In its August 2003 issue, while the ban was still in effect, Guns & Ammo ran a feature story titled "Stoner's 'Black Rifle' Marches On," subtitled "The basic AR platform has been refined, improved, upgraded, power-boosted and accurized."

Sales figures for the AR-15 aren't made public. But as the ban was about to expire in 2004, the NRA told members "hundreds of thousands of AR-15s have been made and sold since the ban took effect."

In fact, the ban became a powerful tool for the NRA, both politically and for its promotion of gun manufacturers.

Available rifles through the years, 1986-2015

These numbers combine manufacturing, imports and exports to give a picture of the yearly demand for rifles in the U.S.



Source: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; 2017.

Until the ban, sales of firearms had been fairly flat. In the eight years preceding the ban, gun makers produced an average of 1.1 million rifles a year, according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. During the ban, production rose to 1.4 million a year.

That increase is widely attributed to the growing popularity of semi-automatic rifles, now called "modern sporting rifles" by the industry and gun enthusiasts.

How it became 'king of the industry'

Through a combination of tragedy, profit, fear, curiosity and mysterious human psychology, the AR-15 shed its early reputation as an ugly misfit and found a new place as a nimble, versatile fan favorite.

Among sporting rifles, "AR-15 is the king of the industry, so to speak," said Michael Weeks, owner of Georgia Gun Store, which boasts "the best selection of firearms in North Georgia."

Veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were comfortable with the weapon. It's also lightweight, adaptable, and relatively easy to maintain.

More than 15 million

The number of AR-15s owned
by Americans today



Source: The National Rifle Association

Owners can remodel the guns themselves, or they can construct one from scratch with their favorite features.

"It's everything you want," said Bartocci, the "Black Rifle II" author. "You want a hunting rifle? It does it. You want a target rifle? It does it. You want a law-enforcement rifle? It does it."

The AR-15 is now the most popular sporting rifle in the U.S. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, AR-15 style rifles accounted for [an estimated 61 percent of all US civilian rifle sales in 2016](#). The National Rifle Association [reports](#) that Americans own more than 15 million AR-15s today.

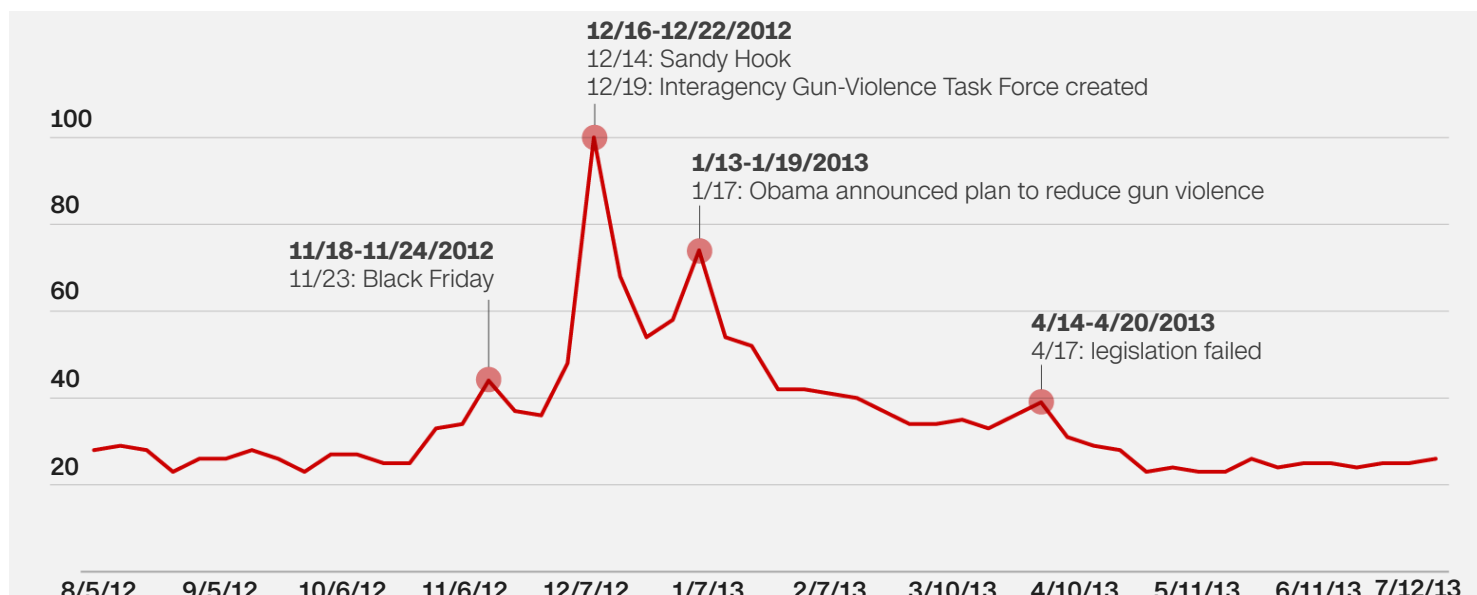
As more AR-15 style rifles entered the market, the competition caused the price to drop. During the ban, Weeks said an AR-15 could have cost well over \$1,000. But an AR-15 from his store costs as little as \$400 today.

How Obama's election stoked sales

By now the relationship between gun sales and anti-gun rhetoric was well-established. So after the assault-weapons ban became defunct in late 2004, rifle production numbers remained relatively flat.

Google Trends Index for Searches Including the Words "Buy Gun"

Values have been indexed to 100, where 100 is the maximum search interest.



Source: Phillip Levine and Robin McKnight; Google Trend searches.

Then, in early 2009, President Barack Obama took office. Conservative gun owners feared a ban from Democrats in the White House and the Capitol, and the numbers went wild.

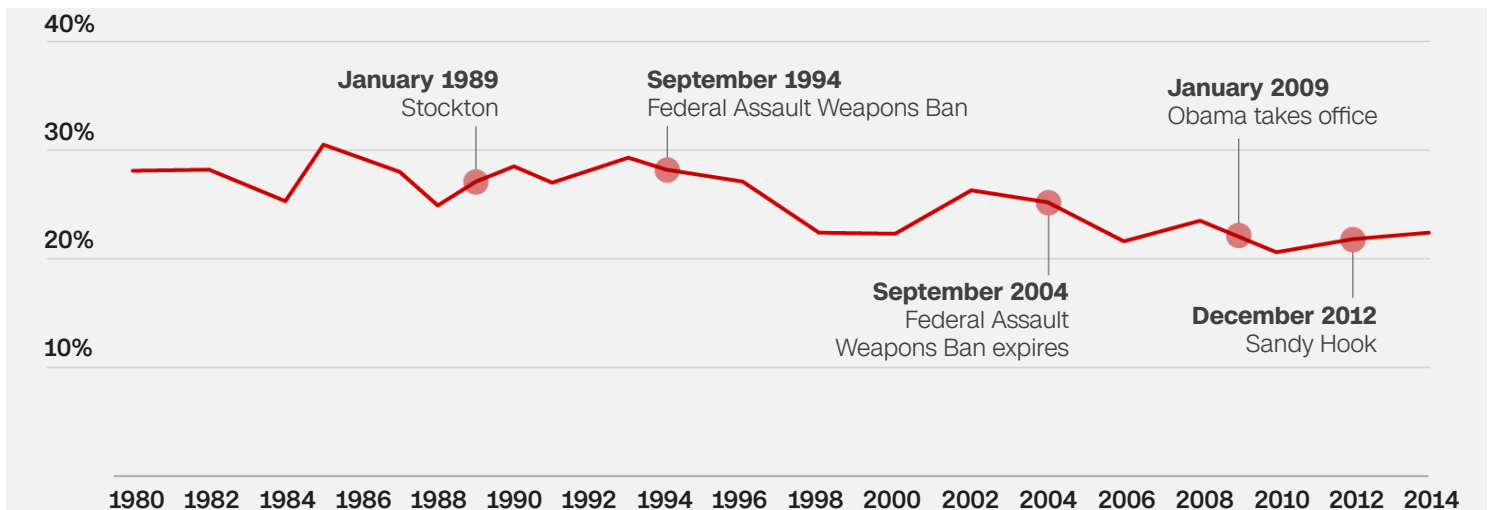
According to the ATF, gun makers began cranking out 2.4 million rifles annually in Obama's first term -- a 52 percent increase from the previous four years of the Bush administration.

In 2008, The Shooting Wire [published](#) a feature titled, "Industry Hanging on to a Single Category."

"For the past few weeks, it may be that we've given a false impression as to how well the firearms industry is really doing," it read. "The net of all the numbers is that if you're a company with a strong line of high-capacity pistols and AR-style rifles, you're doing land office business. If you're heavily dependent on hunting, you are hurting."

Gun ownership over the years, 1980-2014

The number of individuals who reported owning a gun has generally declined.



Source: General Social Survey/NORC

This illustrated a fundamental shift taking place among gun owners. [Gun ownership has declined](#) over the last decades, and many gun owners' motivations have changed.

"There are far fewer hunters now than there ever have been," said Weeks.

In 1999, [a Pew survey asked gun owners why they owned a gun](#). Almost 50 percent said "hunting", and 26 percent said "protection." By 2017, those numbers had reversed -- 67 percent said they had a gun for protection and only 38 percent said hunting.

How history is repeating itself

Five years ago this week, Sandy Hook devastated the nation. It was Stockton writ larger -- including the threat of a new ban. The fear that had elevated gun sales during the Obama administration was now on the horizon, and so up again they went. In 2013, total rifle production exploded to nearly 4 million, according to the ATF.

The ban never materialized. Despite strong public support for expanding background checks, President Obama [failed](#) to get even that legislation through Congress. The attack shattered the nation and raised cries for action. But the shooting that was supposed to change everything changed little.

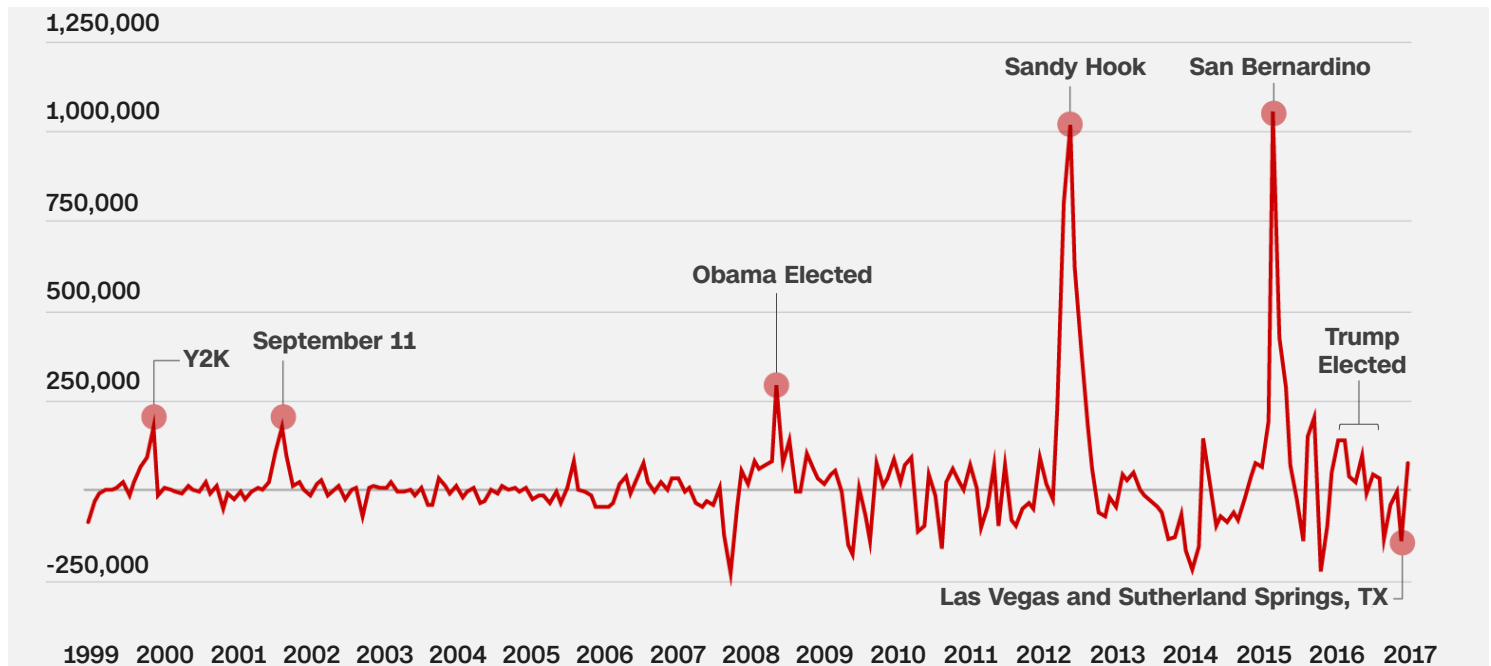
As gun sales kept climbing, so did the body count.

- The shooter who killed 58 people and injured more than 500 [in the Las Vegas massacre](#) on October 1, 2017, used several AR-15 style rifles equipped with bump stocks to mimic fully-automatic rifles.
- On November 5, 2017, a shooter killed 26 people [inside a Texas church](#) using a Ruger AR-556, an AR-15-style rifle.
- [Twelve people](#) were killed and 70 injured in a 2012 shooting inside a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado. The shooter's weapons included a Smith & Wesson M&P15, an AR-15 style rifle.

- In San Bernardino, California, a married couple ^{#8280} people and wounded 21 in a 2015 shooting. The couple used two AR-15 style guns, among others.

The gun that had been created to mow down combatants in the Vietnam jungles was now a de facto calling card of some of the country's most heinous mass shooters.

Monthly Firearm Sales



Note: Data was seasonally adjusted and detrended. The spike caused by idiosyncracies in North Carolina gun sales data in February and March 2014 has been removed by linear interpolation.

Source: Authors' Phillip Levine and Robin McKnight calculations based on data from the NICS database on background checks conducted.

When President Trump was elected in 2016, gun owners rejoiced and the president of the National Shooting Sports Foundation [called](#) him the "most pro-Second Amendment President in recent history."

So when the Las Vegas massacre happened, the deadliest shooting in modern American history, the frenzy wasn't as great.

The shooting that was supposed to change everything changed little.

"When you have a president that says, 'It's not the gun, it's mental illness,' people are a lot calmer about it," says Weeks, the Georgia gun shop owner.

While the impact of the shooting is too recent to measure ^{#8281}ugh production numbers, anecdotally, gun sales didn't see as sharp a rise.

But something else did: Bump stocks.

Sellers said people who hadn't heard of them before the Vegas shooting rushed in to get one -- suspecting they would soon be banned.

EXHIBIT 19

Set And Play Local Radio



LIVE RADIO

SHOWS



NATIONAL

Why The AR-15 Is America's Rifle

LISTEN · 4:04

QUEUE

Download

Transcript

February 15, 2018 · 5:14 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered

ALAIN STEPHENS

The AR-15 semi-automatic rifle is one of the most popular weapons in America. It's also been the weapon of choice for several mass murderers, including the gunman who killed 17 people on Wednesday at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.

MARY LOUISE KELLY, HOST:

The weapon used in yesterday's shooting was an AR-15 rifle. And if that sounds familiar, that's because it's the same type of gun used to kill first-graders and staff at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The San Bernardino shooters carried AR-15-style rifles. The man who killed 49 people at Pulse nightclub in Orlando used one, too. And on the Las Vegas Strip, site of the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history, among the weapons stockpiled was an AR-15. Why? Why is it the weapon of choice in so many of these shootings? Here to help answer that question is reporter Alain Stephens of KUT in Austin. He's part of NPR's criminal justice team. He's also former military, having served in the Coast Guard and Air Force. Hi, Alain.

ALAIN STEPHENS, BYLINE: Hi, how are you doing?

KELLY: I'm all right, thanks. Why do people^{#8284} mined to carry out this kind of mass casualty attack, why do they so often choose an AR-15?

STEPHENS: Well, I think part of it is because the AR-15 as a weapon is simply a very popular weapon. It's very much woven into the DNA of America's gun culture. And part of that kind of goes into its ease of use, its availability and, you know, it's just a commonplace weapon within the firearms market.

KELLY: When you say ease of use, an AR-15 is a semi-automatic, which means you need to squeeze the trigger for each bullet.

STEPHENS: Correct, correct.

KELLY: It's also very accurate as these rifles go. Is that right?

STEPHENS: Yes, yes. So it was developed in the 1950s. A lot of people feel that, you know, the AR stands for assault rifle or automatic rifle, but, actually, it stands for Armalite. That's the original company that developed it. And a variant of this rifle was chosen by the U.S. military and saw its first major-scale deployment within the Vietnam War. And just like any weapon that's chosen by the military, there's a couple factors that have to be decided upon, and one of those is reliability, accuracy and ease of use. You have to have people that are able to train with it and learn this weapon very readily, and that has a trickle-down effect because all of those components kind of enter into the civilian market. And that's why the civilian market has a tendency to gravitate towards this rifle.

KELLY: How much do they cost if I walked into a gun store today?

STEPHENS: One of the things that we have seen in recent years after the assault weapons ban ended in 2004 was this really huge explosion of these boutique kind of rifle companies that are producing these very high-end rifles that are very customizable. Some of those can, you know, range in the thousands of dollars. But on the lower end for a basic, very kind of skeletal rifle, you know, you could buy one for \$800 at, you know, your regular sporting goods store.

KELLY: What are the key arguments made b^{#8285} favor of restricting sales of this type of gun to the general public and by people who argue that this gun should be widely available?

STEPHENS: As far as restricting this, you know, a lot of people are pointing to the idea that, listen, these features - the vertical grip, the large capacity magazine - these are things that are too powerful for the civilian market to need for self-defense or hunting and that these things should be limited. There's also this kind of argument about, well, who can access these weapons in the first place that we need to have tougher background checks? On the flip side of that argument, though, a lot of people say the AR-15 is no different than many other rifles out there but doesn't have that kind of title of being the preferred weapon of mass shooters.

KELLY: Another argument I've heard made by people who support unrestricted sales of the AR-15 is that it's not actually the gun that most Americans are going to die from. If they're dying in gun violence, it's much more likely to be a handgun, right?

STEPHENS: Yeah. You know, according to the latest Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms tracing reports, handguns account for about 60 percent of the guns that are being traced back to crimes. Rifles of any type are - only account for about 13 percent. Handguns are still kind of the more popular weapon being used in crime.

KELLY: Thanks, Alain.

STEPHENS: Thank you.

KELLY: That's Alain Stephens of KUT in Austin - also part of NPR's criminal justice team.

Copyright © 2018 NPR. All rights reserved. Visit our website terms of use and permissions pages at www.npr.org for further information.

NPR transcripts are created on a rush deadline by Verb8tm, Inc., an NPR contractor, and produced using a proprietary transcription process developed with NPR. This text may not be in its final form and may be updated or revised in the future. Accuracy and availability may vary. The authoritative record of NPR's programming is the audio record.

EXHIBIT 20



[U.S. NEWS](#)

America's rifle: Why so many people love the AR-15

The Instagram tag #ar15 has over 1.7 million posts, with updates by the minute



Megan Hill, 26, with an AR-15 at the Nephi City Shooting Range in Nephi, Utah, in December 2017.

Kim Raff for NBC News

Dec. 27, 2017, 10:19 AM PST / Updated Feb. 15, 2018, 5:08 AM PST

By Jon Schuppe

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. — There are a lot of reasons people love their AR-15 semiautomatic rifles, and it doesn't much matter to them what the haters say.

For some, the gun is a tool, a finely tuned machine that can cut down an animal or intruder, or pierce a distant target, with a single precise shot.

For others, it is a toy, a sleek beast of black plastic and metal that delivers a gratifying blast of adrenaline.

And for many, it is a symbol, the embodiment ^{#8288} American values – freedom, might, self-reliance.

“There are very few things that serve such a great form and function, and look cool,” said Daniel Chandler, 26, an AR-15 owner here in suburban Maryland. When he takes his AR out of its case at a shooting range, he smiles like he just unwrapped a gift. “There are few things you’ll find that are wonderfully appealing to look at, wonderful exercises in mechanical engineering, and that could save your life.”

This is the side of the AR-15 that many don’t see, or ever consider.

Because [an AR-15, or a variant](#), was reportedly used [in several mass shootings](#) – including [Aurora, Colorado; Newtown, Connecticut; San Bernardino](#), California; [Sutherland Springs](#), Texas; [Las Vegas](#) and Parkland, Florida, in which a total of 154 people were killed – this civilian sibling of a military assault rifle is an exceptionally polarizing product of modern American industry. The AR-15 and its semiautomatic cousins – they shoot one round for each pull of the trigger – [incite repulsion](#) among those who see them as excessive, grotesque and having no place on the civilian market.

It is the focus of multiple attempts at prohibition, which in turn has prompted people to run out and buy more. Such “panic buying” drove sales of AR-15s to record levels during the presidency of Barack Obama and the 2016 presidential campaign. Gun merchants say some buyers are also driven by a fascination with a weapon used in notoriously heinous crimes.



Once banned, these assault rifles are hugely popular in the U.S.

JUNE 14, 201600:53

Fears of a ban have subsided under gun-friendly President Donald Trump, and so have sales; gun makers are in the midst of a year-long slump that has driven down prices for AR-style rifles. Those discounts appear to have driven [a record number of Black Friday gun background checks](#).

Devotees say the AR-15 has been wrongly demonized, arguing that the vast majority of owners never use it in a crime, and that despite the rifle's use in mass shootings, it is responsible for a very small proportion of the country's gun violence.

Thanks to that ardent following, and shrewd marketing, the AR-15 remains a jewel of the gun industry, the country's most popular rifle, irreversibly lodged into American culture.

From Vietnam to the mainstream

The AR-15 was developed in the late 1950s as a civilian weapon by Eugene Stoner, a former Marine working for small California startup called ArmaLite (which is where the AR comes from). The gun, revolutionary for its light weight, easy care and adaptability with additional components, entered the mainstream in the mid-1960s, after Colt bought the patent and developed an automatic-fire version for troops in Vietnam, called the M16.

The civilian model wasn't mass produced until ^{#8290}Os, after the original patent expired and a variety of companies began making them. That transformed a specific brand to a more generic offering on which a mini-industry would flourish.

When the AR-15 and other semiautomatic rifles began to turn up in shootings, a movement began to restrict their manufacture and sale. Much of the outrage stemmed from the militaristic appearance of those guns, and their ability to fire rapidly.

But there was also a more visceral reason, involving flesh and blood. AR-15s inflict much more damage to human tissue than the typical handgun, which is used in most shootings. That's largely because of the speed at which projectiles leave the weapons; they are much faster out of the muzzle of an AR-15, or similar rifle, and deliver a more devastating blow to bones and organs. Those projectiles are also more likely to break apart as they pass through the body, inflicting more damage.

"The higher muzzle-velocity projectiles, if they strike an organ, you're more likely to have severe injury and bleeding and dying than with lower muzzle-velocity munitions," said Donald Jenkins, a trauma surgeon at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and the owner of several guns, including an AR-15.

The backlash peaked in 1994, when President Bill Clinton signed [a ban on the sale of many types of semiautomatic rifles deemed "assault weapons,"](#) including versions of the AR-15. Manufacturers continued making versions of the AR-15 that complied with the new law, which was allowed to expire in 2004. That set the stage for an explosion in AR-15 sales.

By then, military-style weapons were becoming a more common sight in America, due largely to the response to the 9/11 attacks. Anti-terror police forces began patrolling cities and transportation hubs, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were covered intimately. That higher visibility seemingly fed a desire among gun owners to get what the troops and cops were using.

With encouragement from the gun industry, the AR-15 grew popular not only among people who enjoyed owning the latest tactical gear, but also among recreational and competitive target shooters, and hunters. Many saw it as a pinnacle of firearms engineering – ergonomic, accurate, reliable.

"It's kind of the standard, de-facto rifle now," said Evan Daire, 23, a gun-range worker in New Jersey who aspires to become a professional target shooter. "No matter what role you're looking at, it pretty much fills that role."

Production of AR-style guns has soared since the federal ban expired. In 2004, 107,000 were made. In 2015, the number was 1.2 million, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF),

an industry trade association. The organization^{#8291} not provide sales data, nor does it have 2016 production estimates, but says that year's activity likely broke all records.

Today, [one of out of every five firearms purchased in this country is an AR-style rifle](#), according to a NSSF estimate. Americans now [own an estimated 15 million AR-15s](#), gun groups say. New AR-15 style guns range widely in price, from about \$500 to more than \$2,000.

'Destined to be a best-seller'

Chandler is an unlikely AR enthusiast. He grew up outside Baltimore, a city plagued by gun violence, raised by parents opposed to firearms and was friends with kids whose lives had been torn apart by them. For much of his youth he considered himself anti-gun.

Then a well-to-do neighbor was shot in a home invasion. Chandler realized that his family had no weapon to defend itself, and decided to buy a gun when he got old enough.

Daniel Chandler, 26, has been collecting guns for four years. He has some AR-15s in his collection.

Andre Chung / for NBC News

When he turned 21 and began shopping, Maryland tightened laws in response to the December 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. That measure banned many types of semiautomatic rifles, so when Chandler eventually decided that he wanted an AR-15, he built one from scratch, adhering to the new restrictions. It's black and green, with a 16-inch barrel, a collapsible stock and an electronic red-dot sight.

On one of his recent visits to a gun range, Chandler showed what made the AR-15 a cutting-edge gun when it was created, and one reason why it became so widespread. Pushing the gun's "takedown pins" with his fingers, he broke his gun down into its basic components, and within several seconds snapped it back together.

This is why some people compare the AR-15 to a car chassis, others to Legos or Mr. Potato Head. It is relatively easy to take it apart, reassemble it and modify it — including changes to the caliber of ammunition it fires. Those who build ARs from scratch link themselves to a centuries-old American gunsmithing tradition.



In the Age of Trump, black church preaches Gospel of God and guns

MAY 8, 2017 05:40

“It was destined to be a best-seller because of these qualities,” said Dave Kopel, a gun-rights advocate and research director at the Independence Institute, a libertarian think tank in Denver.

[Building an AR-15 at home](#) often begins with buying a “lower receiver,” the only part with a serial number and that requires a federal background check. The rest of the core parts are available online. Then there is a seemingly endless array of accessories: barrels, grips, stocks, rails, magazines and scopes.

Related: Oklahoma Man Uses AR-15 to Kill Three Teen Home Intruders

Chandler loves the AR he built. He admires its simple, efficient mechanics, its precision, and how much fun it brings. He fires almost weekly for target practice, along with a Glock 17 handgun. He’s taken his wife to the range with him, and she’s become an AR fan herself, preparing to build her own.

Chandler, who is black, doesn't have many friends who enjoy guns as much as he does. So he has created a firearm-focused [Instagram page](#) to find similarly minded people, many of them millennial first-generation gun owners like himself.

“The AR-15 makes sense, and I think that’s why ^{#8293}people my age are gravitating to it,” Chandler said.

The hashtag #ar15 has over 1.8 million tags on Instagram, with users uploading by the minute.



Heckler Und Koch
[@rollerlyfe](#)

[#Repost @30caliberfury](#)

. . .

Long, loud, and heavy - and I wouldn't want it any other way.

-B

.
GETME



2/15/18



[@mrjarodsmith](#)



[@prod_702](#)



Follow Us

Join The Conversation

[@texaspistolero](#)



[@falcon408](#)

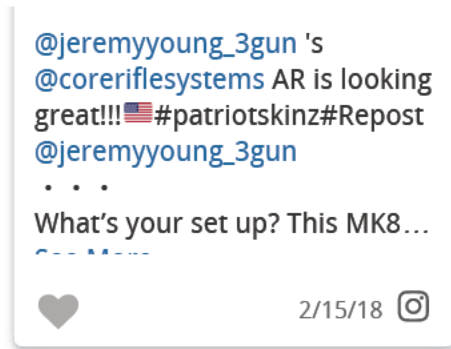
[@em_aych_3](#)

[@machinegungirls](#)

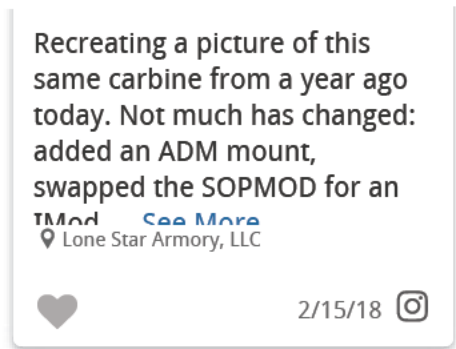
patriotskinz
[@patriotskinz](#)



Taylor
[@texaspistolero](#)



@owenyeasting



Growth and backlash

This new generation of gun owners, who show off their accessorized rifles on social media – and often seek sponsorship deals with manufacturers – are a reflection of how conventional the AR-15 has become.

Gun makers have goosed sales by emphasizing the AR-15s connection to the military and the fight to defend one's freedoms, an argument that grew more effective during movements to ban them.

But gun-control advocates say the industry has exploited people's fears and desires, promoting a gun originally designed to kill people. They argue that AR-15s and similar guns cause more damage, and death, when used in mass shootings.

"I'm not going to question whether people say they prefer the gun to hunt with, but there's certainly been a push by the industry to make assault weapons viewed in people's minds as an acceptable hunting rifle," said Josh Sugarmann, executive director of the Violence Policy Center, which works to reduce gun violence. "If you look back 10 years ago, that's not the way they were looked at."

The families of people killed in Newtown cited industry marketing techniques [in a pending lawsuit against Remington, the maker of the killer's AR-style rifle](#). Gun groups say the company can't be held responsible, arguing that ["millions of peaceful, law abiding Americans" regularly shoot ARs](#) at the range with no ill effect.

AR-15 owners say the rifle gets unfairly targeted by the actions of individual criminals, and that a ban wouldn't do much to affect gun violence.

"If someone wants to do damage they're going to find a way," said Heidi Rapach, a mother of two from New Jersey whose husband, a police officer, taught her to shoot an AR-15 – and bought her one for Mother's Day. "That doesn't mean guns themselves are the enemy. It's the person. It doesn't mean all the people that own guns and use them properly have to suffer for that."

Related: [Fate of Sandy Hook lawsuit against gun maker could be decided by a slingshot](#)

Since the time of the federal ban, attempts to restrict gun sales have met with mixed success, with tighter restrictions on people accused of domestic violence but wider acceptance of concealed

carry.

Crime rates in America have [declined drastically during that period](#). Even so, AR-15s and similar guns are still used in mass shootings, drawing new rounds of condemnation – and calls for new bans – with each attack.

Some states have enacted their own bans, a list that grew after the 2012 Newtown shooting. States with restrictions on AR-style guns include California, Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York and Maryland – where the 2013 law was upheld by a federal court ruling that asserted [AR-15s were not protected by the Second Amendment](#). None of these states have outlawed the AR-15 altogether, however.

Related: [Assault Weapons Not Protected by Second Amendment, Federal Appeals Court Rules](#)

Gun industry surveys assert that the typical AR-15 owner is [a married man over 35](#), with a large proportion having served in the military or law enforcement. But this appears to be changing. [New buyers tend to be younger and more diverse](#) than the general gun-buying public, according to a 2017 report published by Southwick Associates, a market research firm, and the National Shooting Sports Foundation. [That also includes women.](#)

‘It’s a comfort’

Megan Hill’s relationship with guns goes back as far as she can remember; her parents and grandfather kept firearms in their Southern California homes, and an early boyfriend took her hunting and target shooting. But it wasn’t until she married, moved to Utah and was preparing to have children that she decided to get her own.

Megan Hill, 26, target shoots this month with an AR-15 at the Nephi City Shooting Range in Nephi, Utah. Kim Raff / for NBC News

She and her husband researched which gun would meet their needs: something safe, reliable and versatile.

“We looked at the AR-15, and it was all in one package,” Hill, 26, recalled. “You can target-shoot with it, protect yourself with it, hunt with it. Luckily we haven’t had to use it in self-defense, but it’s a comfort knowing that it’s there to protect my children and my family.”

Her husband ordered parts and built one himself. They’ve since acquired a few more.

This year, after the birth of her second child, Hill^{#8297} ded to start working on becoming a competitive shooter, [documenting her journey on Instagram](#).

“It gave me a sense of myself again: I’m going to make this goal, I’m going to accomplish something,” Hill said.

For Hill, life with an AR-15 can best be described in one word: freedom. She means both personal freedom and a symbolic freedom that connects her to the gun’s use by the U.S. military.

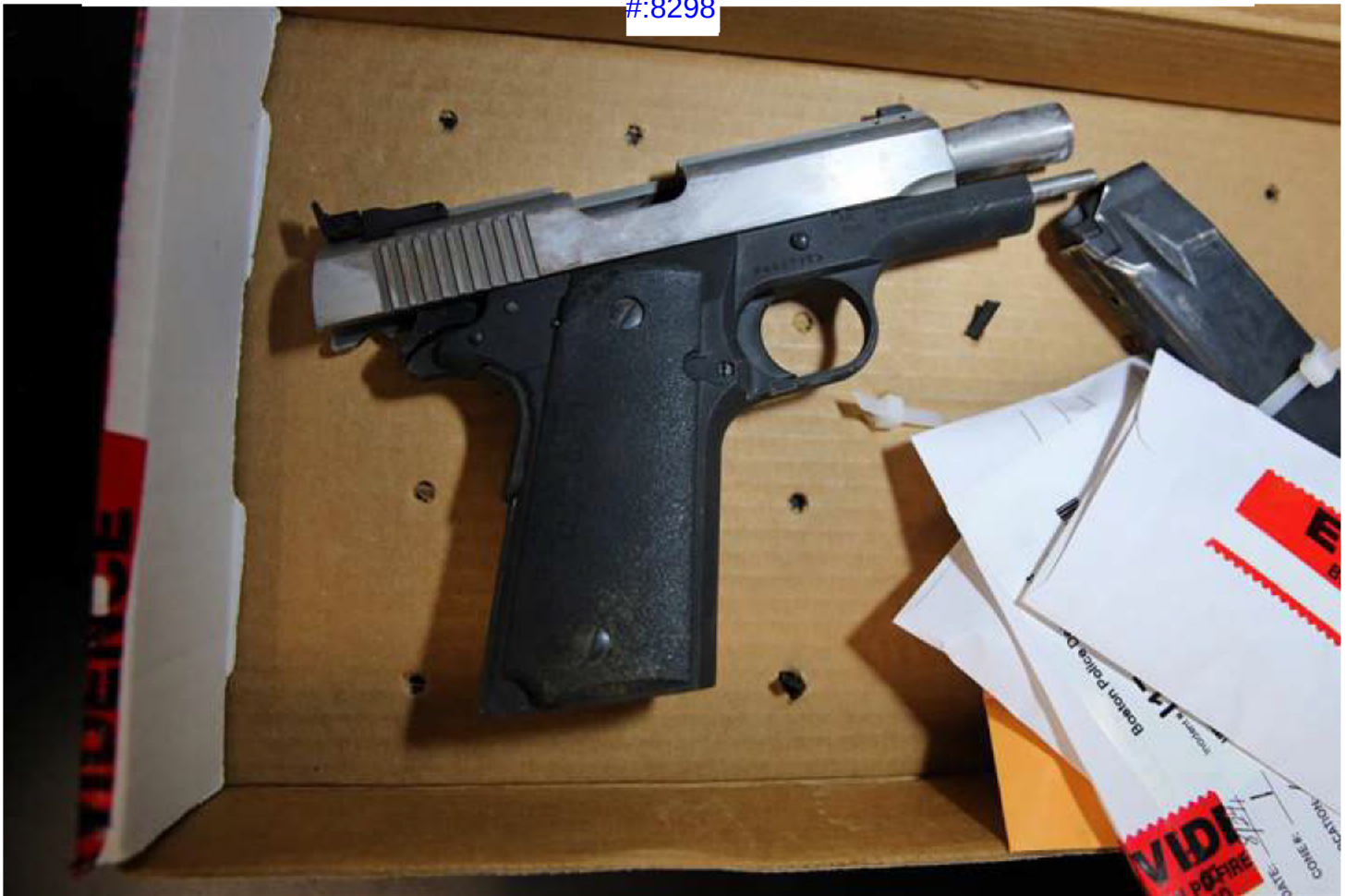
“What makes us a strong nation is our freedom, and the AR-15 represents that freedom,” Hill said.

‘That tactical itch’

The gun industry has another more marketable name for the AR-15: the modern sporting rifle. The label signifies its crossover appeal. The gun is now a key component in shooting sport events and has replaced the bolt-action rifle as the gun of choice for many hunters.

Joey Ploshay is one of them.

Born into a hunting family in the San Francisco Bay Area, Ploshay has two ARs designed for killing game. One has a long barrel for use on varmints: coyotes, bobcats and foxes. The other has a shorter barrel that he takes out on long excursions into the brush, where he hunts for wild pigs. He can change calibers according to the size of the game he’s pursuing. He hosts [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages dedicated to hunting in a state with tight firearm regulations.



[Tracing the gun: the archaic way the U.S. tracks gun ownership](#)

NOV. 29, 2017 07:24

Ploshay, 25, a pipe fitter, said he relies on the ARs because of their precision, which allows him to deliver a single, deadly shot that minimizes the animal's suffering.

"Once I started using it, I fell in love with how easy and accurate and light-recoiling it was," he said.

Rod Pinkston, on the other hand, uses the AR because it can fire follow-up shots quickly. A retired soldier, he runs a Georgia company that develops methods to control the invasive feral pig population in the South. He and his staff, including former Army sharpshooters, depend on their ARs to take out several pigs in a single encounter.

Pinkston sometimes brings paying guests on night expeditions, outfitting them with AR-15s accessorized with top-of-the-line gear, not too different from what he used in the service. Using such a gun gives ordinary people a chance to "scratch that tactical itch," he said.

That Walter Mitty-esque experience, he believes, plays a crucial role in the AR's enduring allure.

"There's something about how guys are made that makes it appeal to them very much," Pinkston said. "I think it has something to do with wanting to be a soldier or law enforcement. There's

Rod Pinkston, owner of a Georgia hog-control company, and one of his AR-10 rifles, a model that is similar to the AR-15 but allows for heavier ammunition. Branden Camp / for NBC News

EXHIBIT 21

NSSF® REPORT 2017 EDITION
FIREARMS
RETAILER
SURVEY REPORT | TREND DATA 2008-2016



Prepared by: Southwick Associates, P.O. Box 6435,
Fernandina Beach, FL 32035
Phone: (904) 277-9765, Fax: (904) 261-1145



THE FIREARMS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION | NSSF.ORG



© National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc. All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be republished, reproduced or redistributed in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, except in the case of brief quotations in articles. NSSF members in good standing may share this publication with their employees, including making it available for internal viewing or download via their company intranet sites, provided 1.) the publication is offered in its entirety, including this paragraph, and 2.) is accompanied by the following notice: "This publication is made available to employees for job reference purposes only, not for redistribution outside the company." A reward is provided to persons who provide conclusive evidence of illegal republication, reproduction, redistribution or other violation of NSSF's rights in the publication.

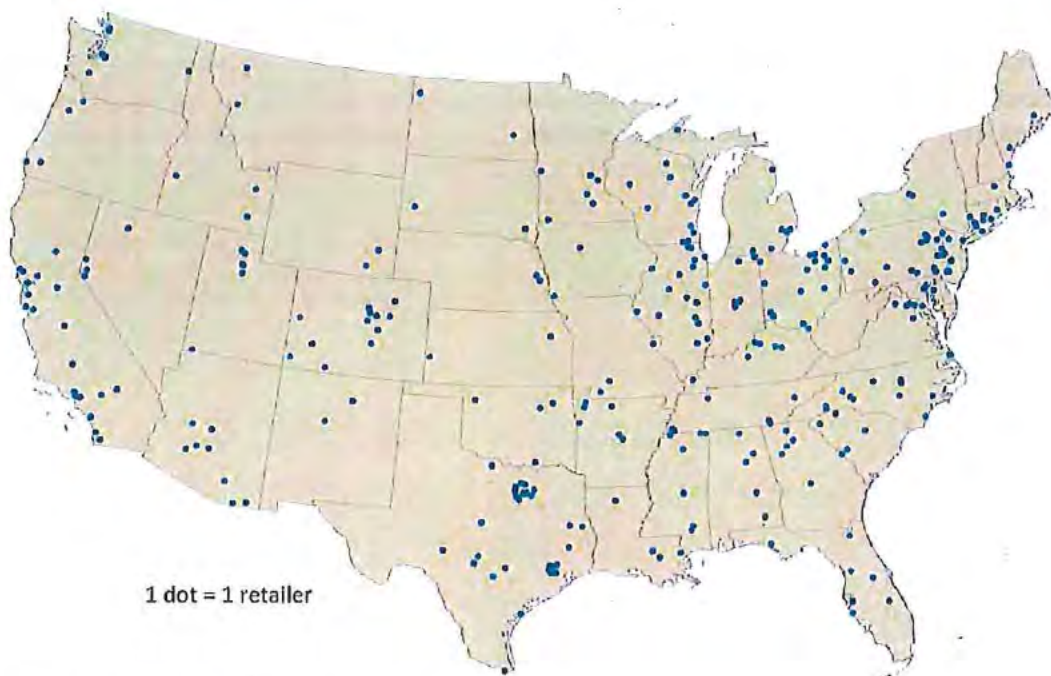
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	1
Products Sold	2
Primary use for firearms sold.....	9
New vs Used firearm sales.....	11
Long gun safe sales.....	13
Sales Trends	19
Sales Margins and Net Profit	23
Inventory	25
Selected Operating Measures.....	27
Markets and Customers	29
Advertising and Online Marketing	33
Shooting Ranges and Other Offerings	35
Social Media and Current Issues.....	38
Background Checks and Operating Systems.....	40

OVERVIEW

This report is the result of an in-depth analysis of the U.S. firearms retail industry sponsored by the National Shooting Sports Foundation. The information for the report was collected through an online survey of retailers that was conducted in March, 2017. The survey respondents included 324 retail establishments located in 45 states. They range in size from single proprietors to large outdoor specialty retailers.

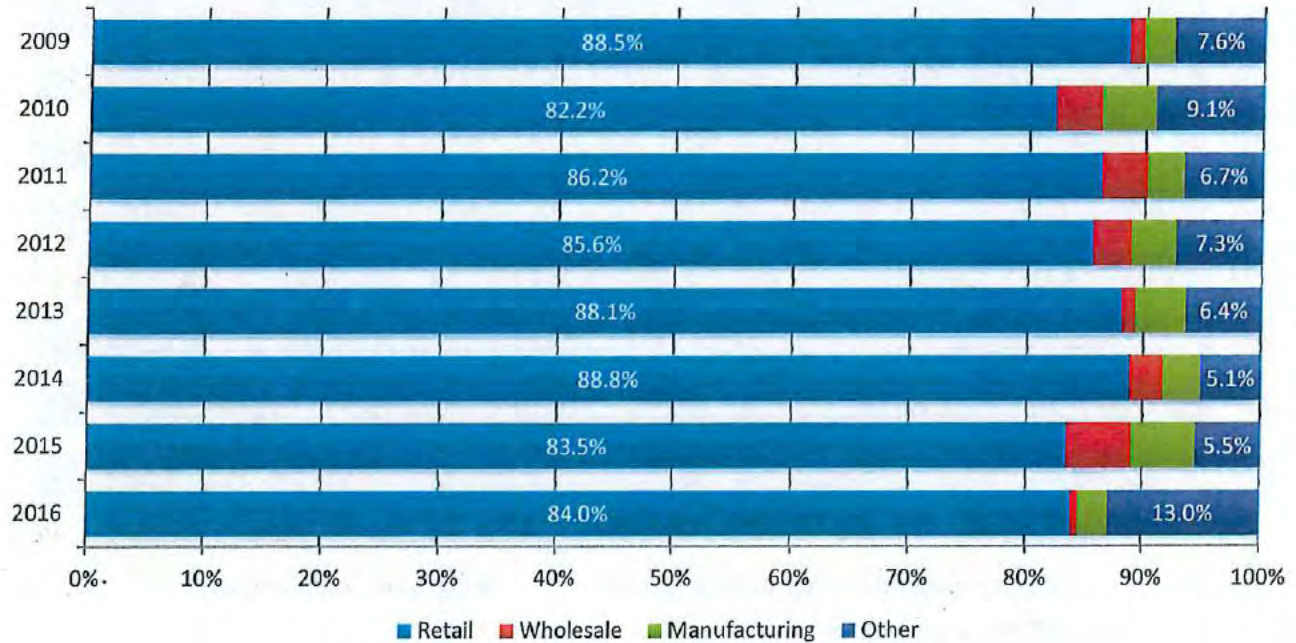
Figure 1. Blue dots show the locations of retailers who responded to the survey.



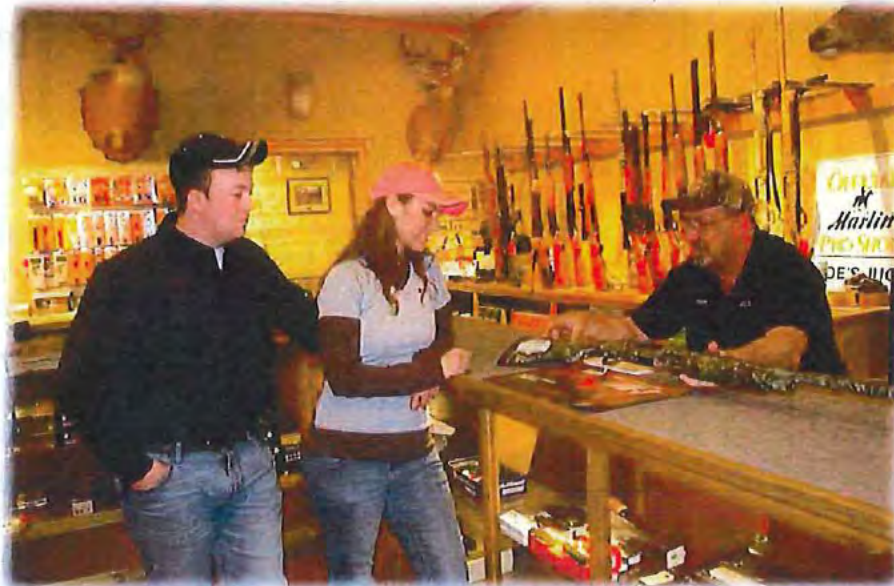
Note: Two additional retailers (one in Alaska and one in Hawaii) also completed the survey

PRODUCTS SOLD

From which business activity does your business earn a majority of its annual revenues?

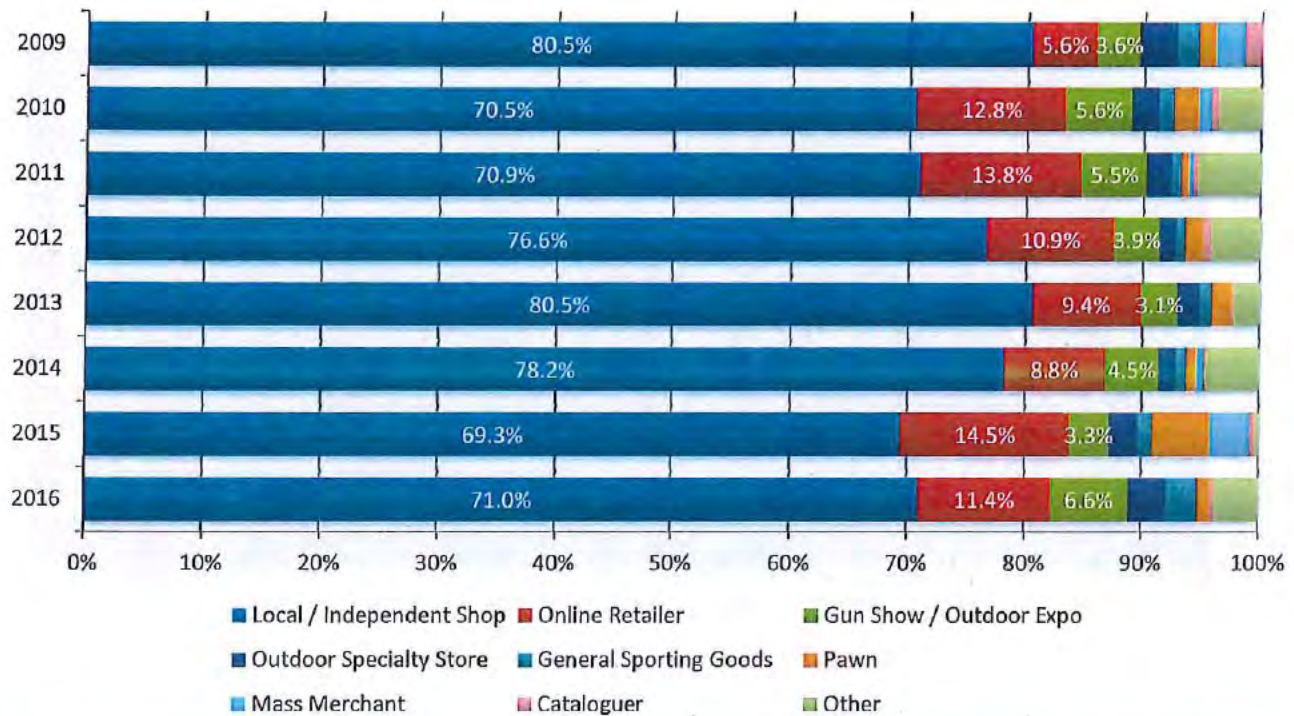


Total number of responses for 2016: 324



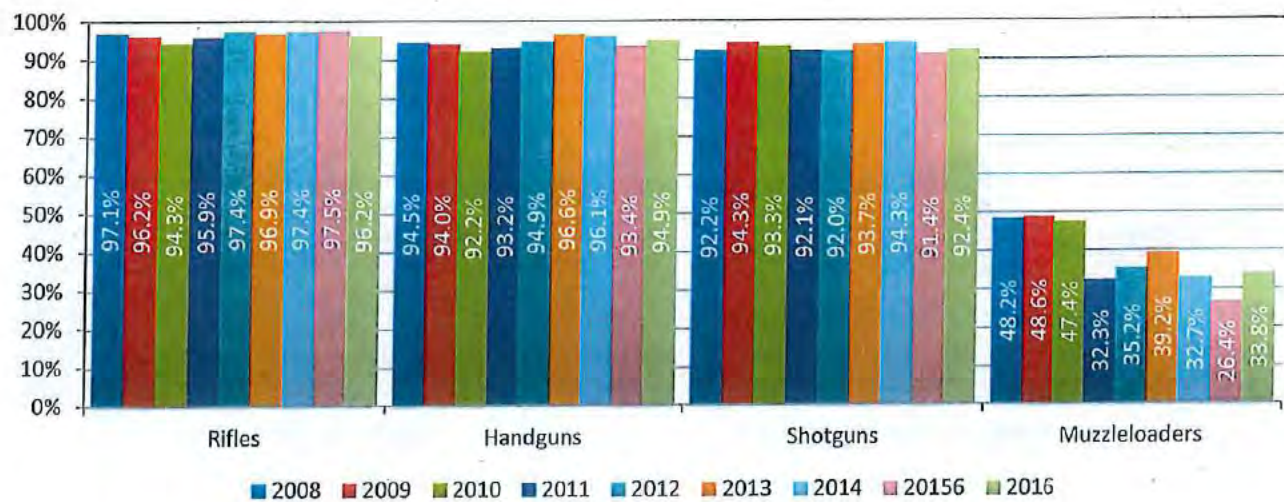
Of those that selected "Retail" as earning the majority of annual revenues:

Please check the category that best describes your retail business:



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Local / Independent Shop	80.5%	70.5%	70.9%	76.6%	80.5%	78.2%	69.3%	71.0%	193
Online Retailer	5.6%	12.8%	13.8%	10.9%	9.4%	8.8%	14.5%	11.4%	31
Gun Show / Outdoor Expo	3.6%	5.6%	5.5%	3.9%	3.1%	4.5%	3.3%	6.6%	18
Outdoor Specialty Store	3.3%	2.4%	2.2%	1.5%	1.9%	1.5%	2.5%	3.3%	9
General Sporting Goods	1.8%	1.2%	0.8%	0.7%	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%	2.6%	7
Pawn	1.5%	2.2%	0.7%	1.6%	1.7%	0.9%	5.0%	1.1%	3
Mass Merchant	2.4%	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	3.3%	n/a	n/a
Cataloguer	1.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	1
Other	n/a	3.6%	5.3%	4.1%	2.2%	4.5%	0.4%	3.7%	10
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	272

Which categories of NEW products do you currently sell?



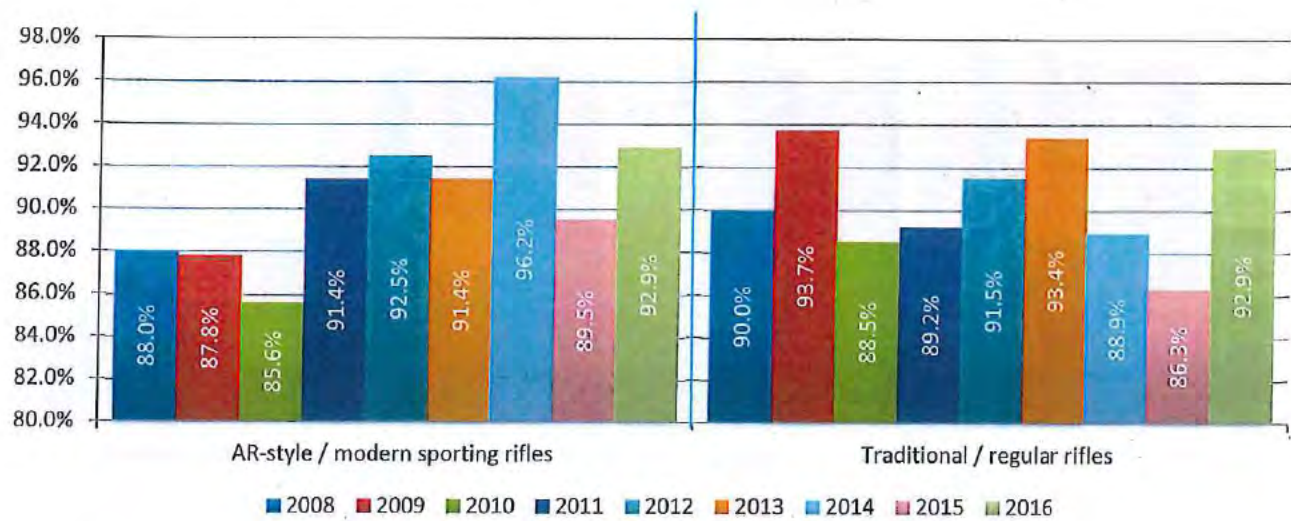
Total number of responses in 2016: n = 266

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Rifles	97.1%	96.2%	94.3%	95.9%	97.4%	96.9%	97.4%	97.5%	96.2%	228
Handguns	94.5%	94.0%	92.2%	93.2%	94.9%	96.6%	96.1%	93.4%	94.9%	225
Shotguns	92.2%	94.3%	93.3%	92.1%	92.0%	93.7%	94.3%	91.4%	92.4%	219
Muzzleloaders	48.2%	48.6%	47.4%	32.3%	35.2%	39.2%	32.7%	26.4%	33.8%	80

Total number of relevant* responses for 2016: 237

**Note: the answer option "None of these" was only offered for the 2016 survey, and was not previously available. In 2016 there were 29 respondents who did not sell any of the firearms listed here. The total number of respondents who answered this question, including those who did not sell any new products, was 266.*

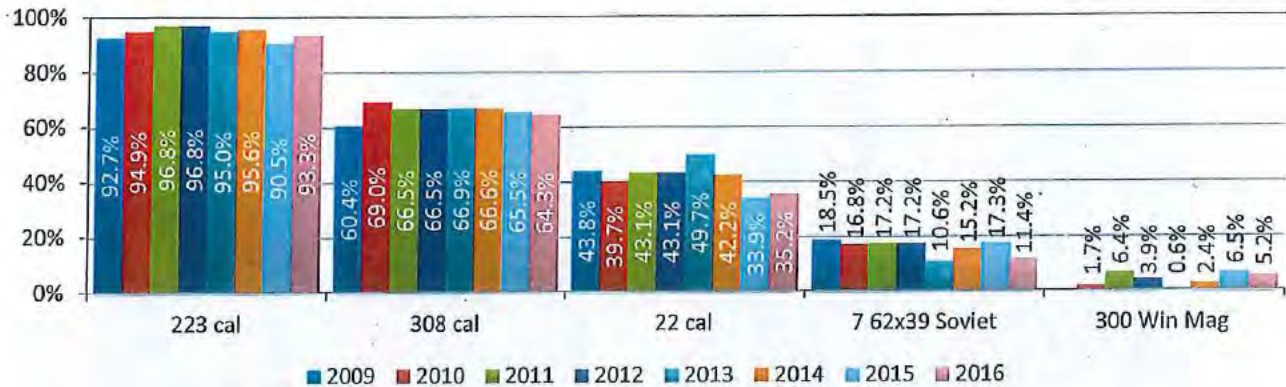
Which type(s) of NEW rifles do you currently sell?



Total number of responses for 2016: n = 226

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
AR-style / Modern Sporting Rifles	88.0%	87.8%	85.6%	91.4%	92.5%	91.4%	96.2%	89.5%	92.9%	210
Traditional Rifles	90.0%	93.7%	88.5%	89.2%	91.5%	93.4%	88.9%	86.3%	92.9%	210

Please check the top three calibers sold for NEW AR-Style / Modern Sporting Rifles:



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
223 cal.	92.7%	94.9%	96.8%	96.8%	95.0%	95.6%	90.5%	93.3%	196
308 cal.	60.4%	69.0%	66.5%	66.5%	66.9%	66.6%	65.5%	64.3%	135
22 cal.	43.8%	39.7%	43.1%	43.1%	49.7%	42.2%	33.9%	35.2%	74
7 62x39 Soviet	18.5%	16.8%	17.2%	17.2%	10.6%	15.2%	17.3%	11.4%	24
300 Win Mag	n/a	1.7%	6.4%	3.9%	0.6%	2.4%	6.5%	5.2%	11
30-06 Springfield	10.0%	9.8%	9.2%	9.2%	4.4%	5.5%	8.3%	4.8%	10
300 WSM	n/a	n/a	2.1%	1.3%	0.6%	1.3%	1.2%	2.4%	5
not sure	n/a	n/a	1.7%	n/a	n/a	0.7%	1.2%	2.4%	5
17 cal.	3.8%	3.4%	0.6%	2.8%	3.1%	1.5%	0.6%	2.4%	5
204 Ruger	6.9%	7.4%	0.4%	2.6%	4.0%	1.5%	0.6%	1.9%	4
300 Rem. Magnum	n/a	1.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.9%	4
243 cal.	3.8%	7.4%	3.4%	6.4%	6.1%	5.1%	3.0%	1.4%	3
30-30 cal.	0.8%	1.3%	3.9%	2.1%	1.1%	1.5%	2.4%	1.4%	3
7mm Remington Mag	1.5%	1.7%	2.1%	1.7%	1.1%	1.3%	1.8%	1.0%	2
270 Winchester	n/a	3.0%	1.3%	1.3%	0.3%	0.7%	1.2%	1.0%	2
270 Remington	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.0%	2
35 Remington	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.0%	2
300 Rem Ultra Magnum	n/a	n/a	1.3%	0.4%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	1
300 Savage	n/a	n/a	1.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	1
300 Weatherby Magnum	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.5%	1
22-250 cal.	3.8%	2.7%	2.8%	2.1%	1.1%	1.3%	2.4%	n/a	n/a
7 mm-08	n/a	1.3%	2.6%	1.3%	0.6%	0.4%	2.4%	n/a	n/a
30 Carbine	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	n/a	n/a
270 WSM	0.8%	1.3%	n/a	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	n/a	n/a
44 Rem			n/a	0.6%	0.3%	1.1%	0.0%	n/a	n/a
303 British	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other	10.4%	7.1%	12.0%	12.0%	16.1%	18.9%	24.4%	27.1%	57

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 210

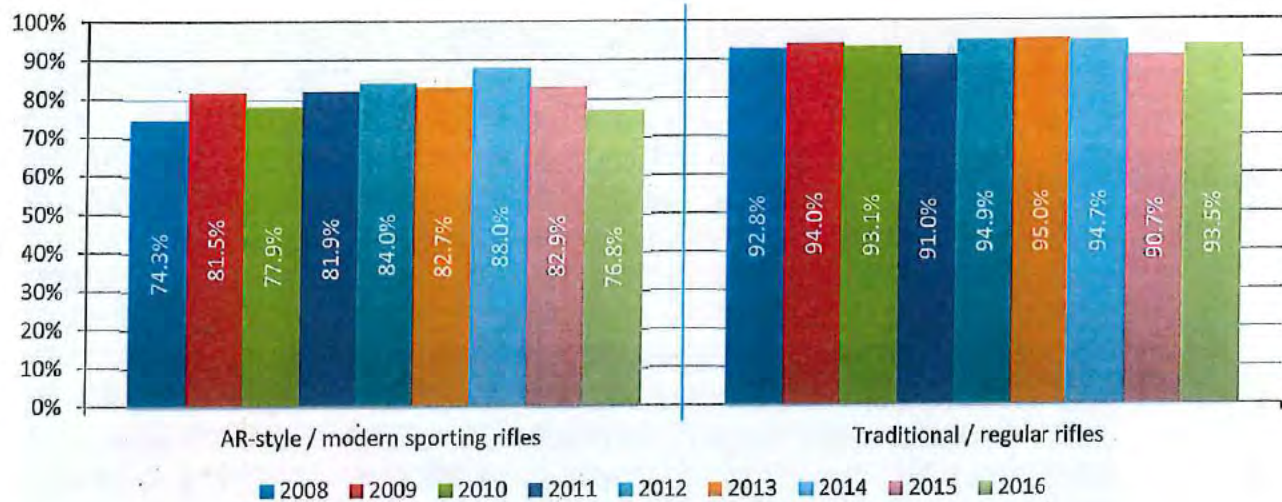


Total number of responses in 2016: n = 183

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Rifles	92.4%	94.3%	91.0%	92.6%	93.5%	93.0%	89.5%	94.1%	96.2%	176
Handguns	92.9%	92.8%	91.0%	92.1%	95.8%	95.0%	95.0%	94.7%	91.8%	168
Shotguns	86.2%	90.1%	88.2%	85.3%	88.8%	87.4%	85.8%	84.9%	84.2%	154
Muzzleloaders	40.1%	41.8%	39.8%	30.0%	30.6%	33.0%	28.7%	26.3%	24.0%	44

**Note: the answer option "None of these" was only offered for the 2016 survey, and was not previously available. In 2016 there were 83 respondents who did not sell any types of used firearms listed here. The total number of respondents who answered this question, including those who did not sell any used products, was 266.*

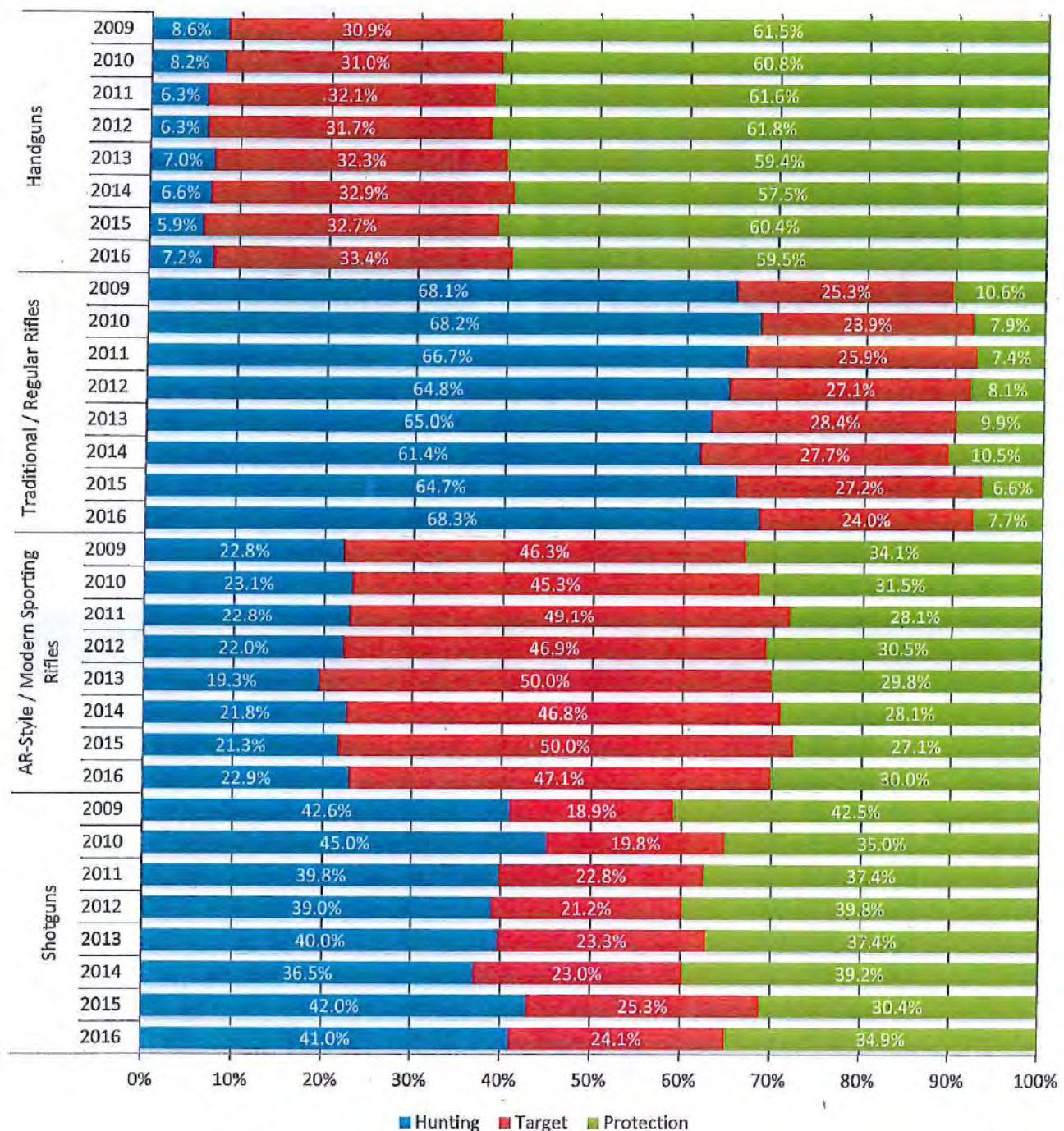
Which type(s) of USED rifles do you currently sell?



Total number of responses in 2016: n =168

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
AR-style / Modern Sporting Rifles	74.3%	81.5%	77.9%	81.9%	84.0%	82.7%	88.0%	82.9%	76.8%	129
Traditional Rifles	92.8%	94.0%	93.1%	91.0%	94.9%	95.0%	94.7%	90.7%	93.5%	157

Of your annual firearm sales, please report the percentages you think were sold primarily for hunting, target-shooting and personal-protection purposes.



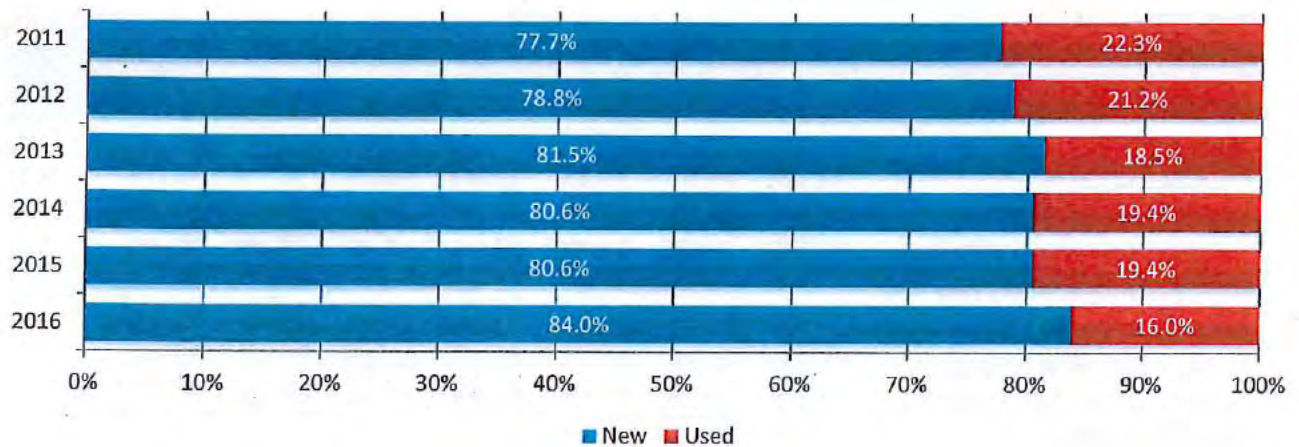
**FOR EXAMPLE: Out of all handguns sold in 2016, responding retailers report their customers were purchasing handguns for personal-protection purposes 59.5% of the time.*

(continued) Of your annual firearm sales, please report the percentages you think were sold primarily for hunting, target-shooting, and personal-protection purposes.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Shotguns								
hunting purposes	42.6%	45.0%	39.8%	39.0%	40.0%	36.5%	42.0%	41.0%
target/informal shooting	18.9%	19.8%	22.8%	21.2%	23.3%	23.0%	25.3%	24.1%
personal-protection purposes	42.5%	35.0%	37.4%	39.8%	37.4%	39.2%	30.4%	34.9%
AR-style/modern sporting rifles								
hunting purposes	22.8%	23.1%	22.8%	22.0%	19.3%	21.8%	21.3%	22.9%
target/informal shooting	46.3%	45.3%	49.1%	46.9%	50.0%	46.8%	50.0%	47.1%
personal-protection purposes	34.1%	31.5%	28.1%	30.5%	29.8%	28.1%	27.1%	30.0%
Traditional rifles								
hunting purposes	68.1%	68.2%	66.7%	64.8%	65.0%	61.4%	64.7%	68.3%
target/informal shooting	25.3%	23.9%	25.9%	27.1%	28.4%	27.7%	27.2%	24.0%
personal-protection purposes	10.6%	7.9%	7.4%	8.1%	9.9%	10.5%	6.6%	7.7%
Handguns								
hunting purposes	8.6%	8.2%	6.3%	6.3%	7.0%	6.6%	5.9%	7.2%
target/informal shooting	30.9%	31.0%	32.1%	31.7%	32.3%	32.9%	32.7%	33.4%
personal-protection purposes	61.5%	60.8%	61.6%	61.8%	59.4%	57.5%	60.4%	59.5%

Total number of responses for 2016: Shotguns (213); AR-style/modern sporting rifles (212); Traditional rifles (211); Handguns (213).

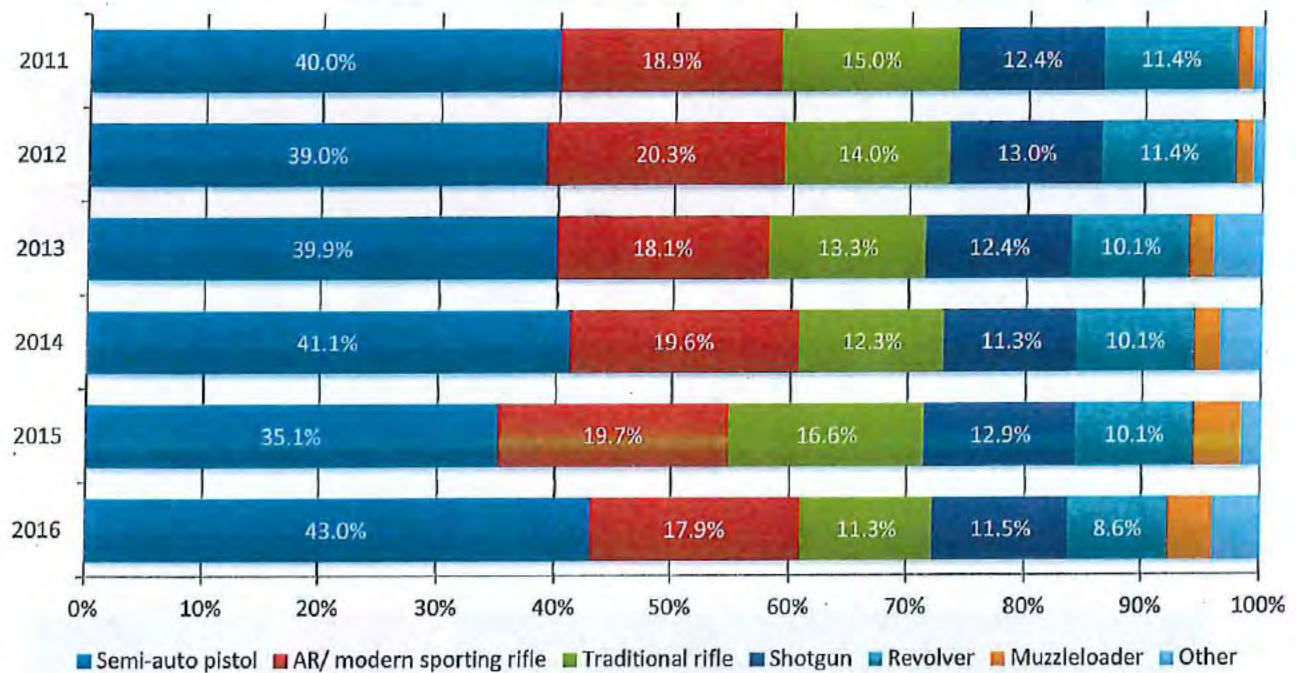
Out of every 100 firearms you sold, approximately how many were **NEW** vs. **USED**?



Total number of responses in 2016: n = 203



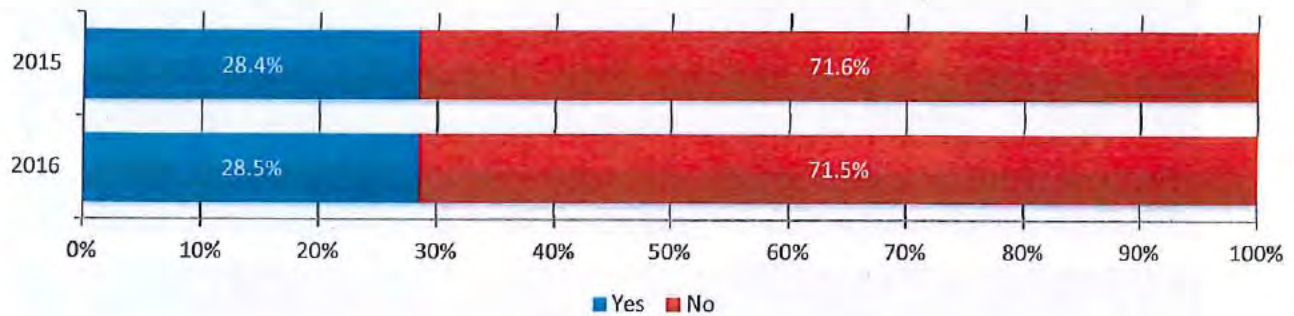
Out of every 100 firearms you sold, approximately how many were:



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2016 Responses
Semi-auto pistol	40.0%	39.0%	39.9%	41.1%	35.1%	43.0%	211
AR/ modern sporting rifle	18.9%	20.3%	18.1%	19.6%	19.7%	17.9%	196
Traditional rifle	15.0%	14.0%	13.3%	12.3%	16.6%	11.3%	198
Shotgun	12.4%	13.0%	12.4%	11.3%	12.9%	11.5%	192
Revolver	11.4%	11.4%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	8.6%	198
Muzzleloader	1.3%	1.5%	2.1%	2.2%	4.0%	3.8%	123
Other	0.9%	0.8%	4.0%	3.4%	1.6%	3.9%	59

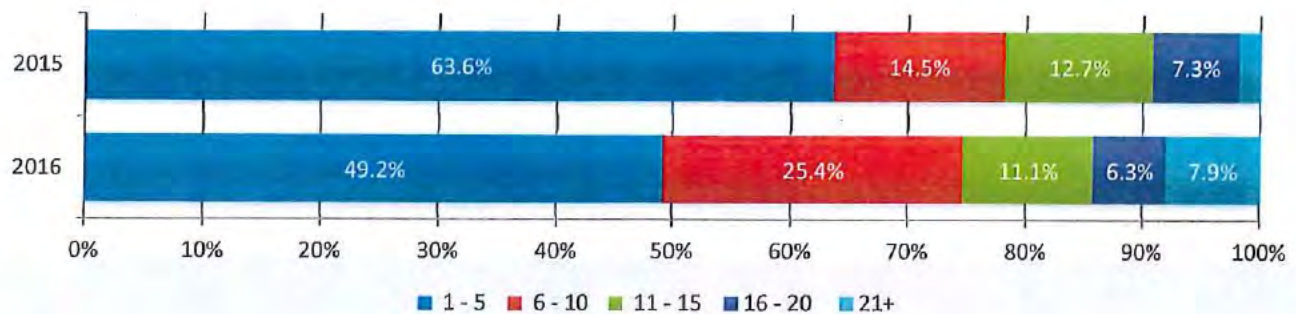
Total number of responses for 2016: n = 214

Does your store(s) carry long gun safes? (full size metal traditional safes; not wooden cabinets, trigger locks or small lock boxes). Total number of responses for 2016: n = 216



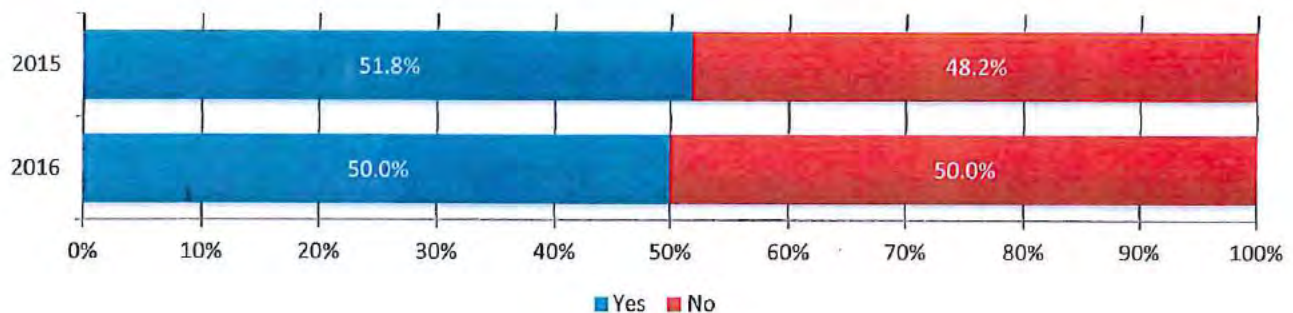
Approximately how many models of long gun safes does your store(s) carry?

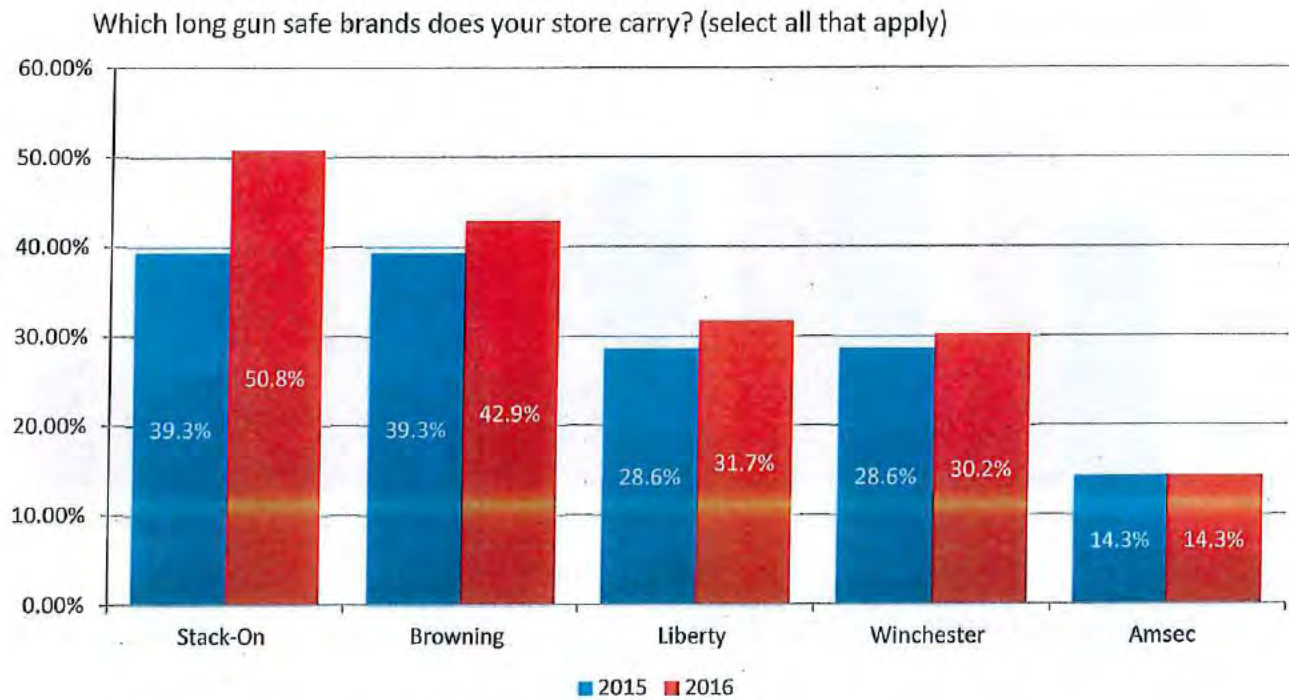
Total number of responses for 2016: n = 63



Does your store(s) offer in-home delivery for such long gun safes?

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 62





Total number of responses for 2016: n = 63

Brand	2015	2016
Stack-On	39.3%	50.8%
Browning	39.3%	42.9%
Liberty	28.6%	31.7%
Winchester	28.6%	30.2%
Amsec	14.3%	14.3%
Cannon	14.3%	12.7%
Heritage	3.6%	12.7%
Champion	10.7%	12.7%
Fort Knox	10.7%	6.3%
Our own store brand	1.8%	6.3%
Rhino	1.8%	3.2%
Other	8.9%	7.9%

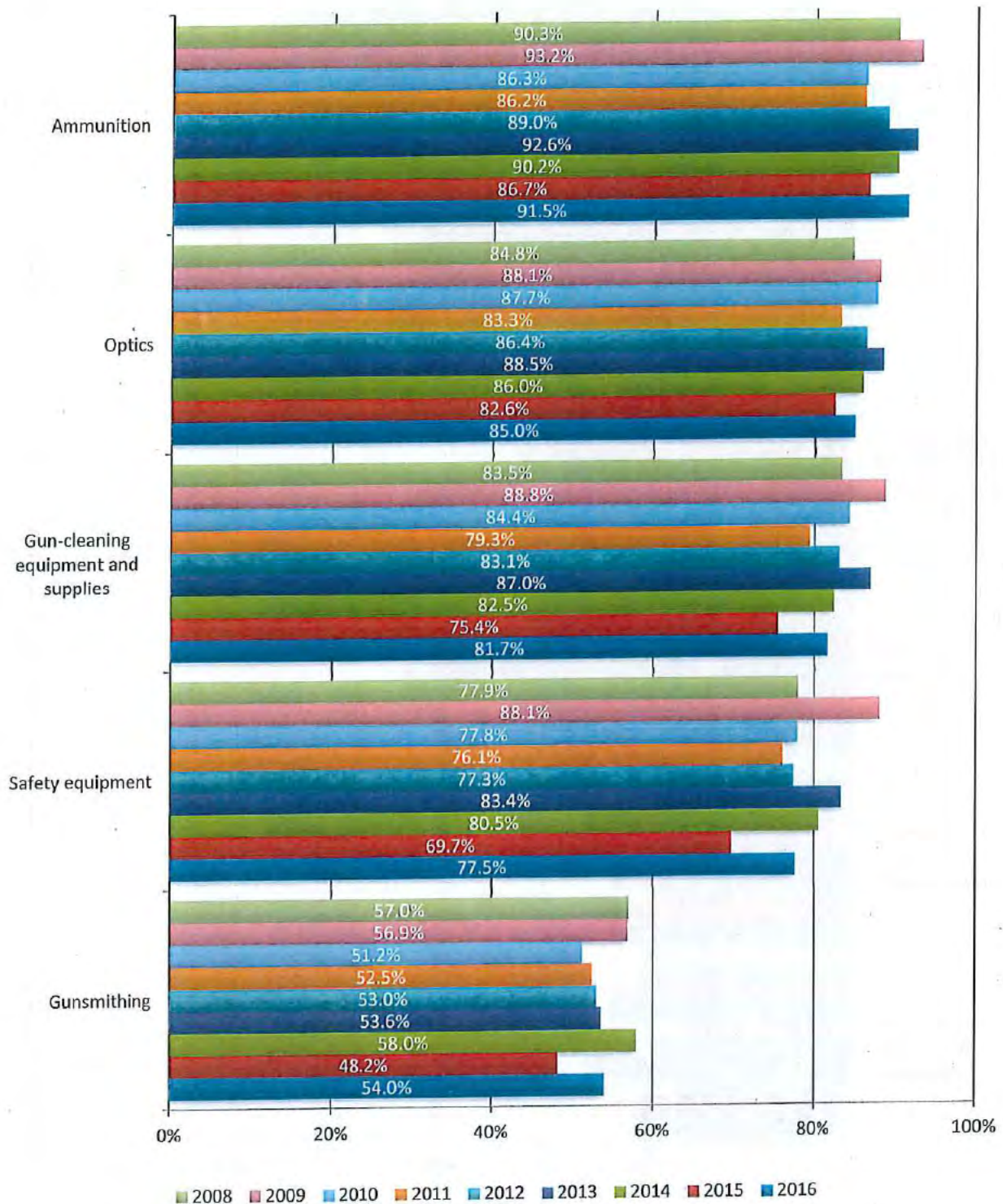
What are the top three most important safe selling features for long gun safes?



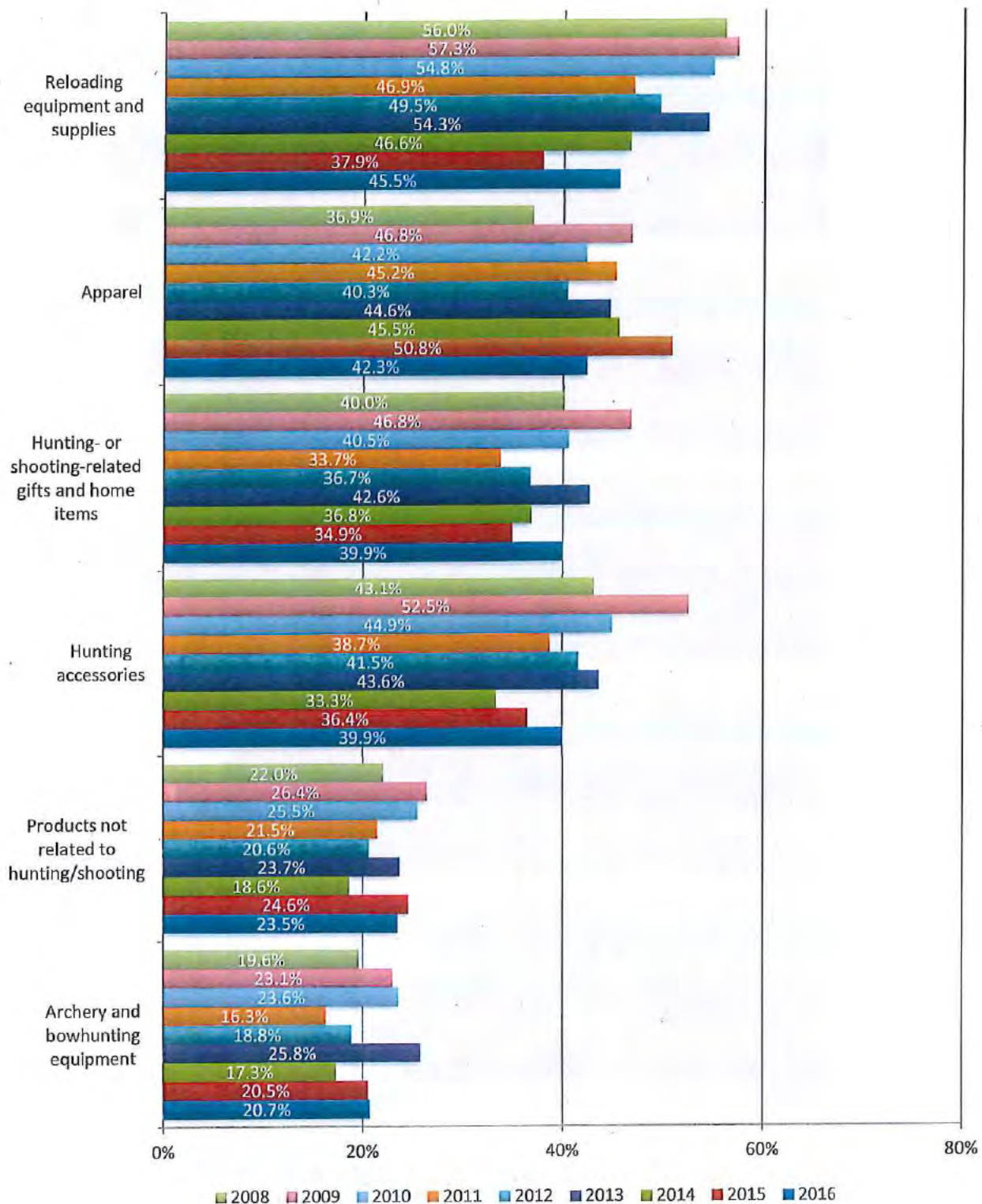
Total number of responses for 2016: n = 62

	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Security	48.2%	65.1%	41
Price	66.1%	61.9%	39
Fire Rating	57.1%	54.0%	34
Long Gun Capacity	46.4%	44.4%	28
Electronic Lock	17.9%	23.8%	15
Interior Configuration	32.1%	22.2%	14
Biometric Lock	3.6%	3.2%	2
Combination Lock	8.9%	1.6%	1
Waterproof	1.8%	0.0%	0

Which of these product categories do you currently sell?



(Continued) Which of these product categories do you currently sell?



(Continued) Which of these product categories do you currently sell?

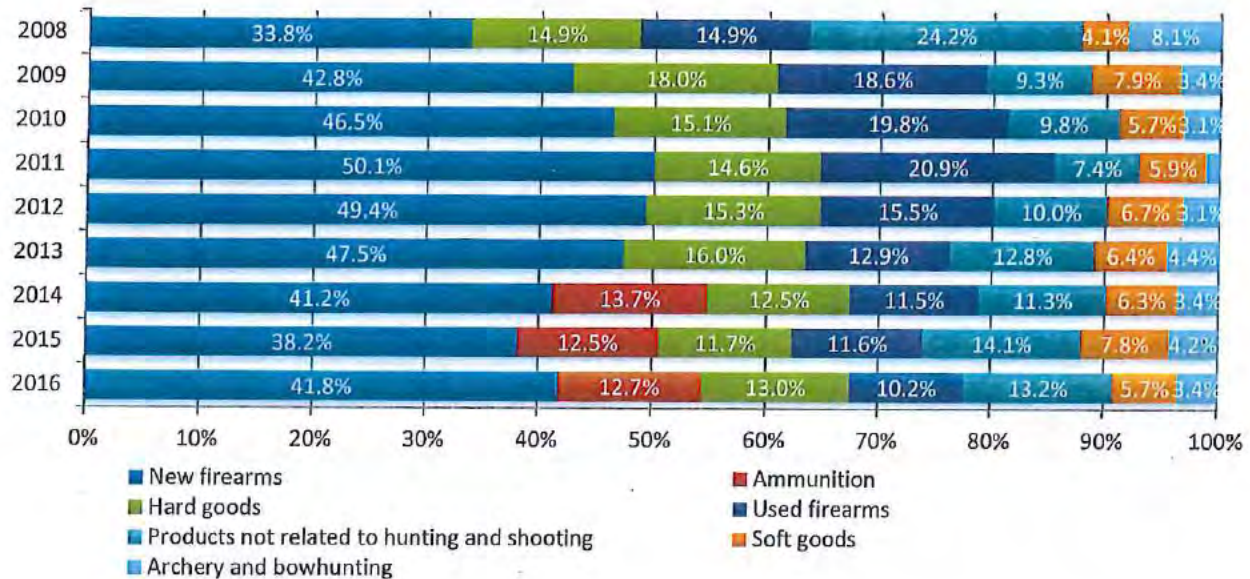
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Ammunition	90.3%	93.2%	86.3%	86.2%	89.0%	92.6%	90.2%	86.7%	91.5%	195
Optics	84.8%	88.1%	87.7%	83.3%	86.4%	88.5%	86.0%	82.6%	85.0%	181
Gun-cleaning equipment and supplies	83.5%	88.8%	84.4%	79.3%	83.1%	87.0%	82.5%	75.4%	81.7%	174
Safety equipment	77.9%	88.1%	77.8%	76.1%	77.3%	83.4%	80.5%	69.7%	77.5%	165
Gunsmithing	57.0%	56.9%	51.2%	52.5%	53.0%	53.6%	58.0%	48.2%	54.0%	115
Reloading equipment and supplies	56.0%	57.3%	54.8%	46.9%	49.5%	54.3%	46.6%	37.9%	45.5%	97
Apparel	36.9%	46.8%	42.2%	45.2%	40.3%	44.6%	45.5%	50.8%	42.3%	90
Hunting accessories	43.1%	52.5%	44.9%	38.7%	41.5%	43.6%	33.3%	36.4%	39.9%	85
Hunting or shooting related gifts and home items	40.0%	46.8%	40.5%	33.7%	36.7%	42.6%	36.8%	34.9%	39.9%	85
Products not related to hunting/shooting	22.0%	26.4%	25.5%	21.5%	20.6%	25.8%	18.6%	24.6%	23.5%	50
Archery and bowhunting equipment	19.6%	23.1%	23.6%	16.3%	18.8%	23.7%	17.3%	20.5%	20.7%	44

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 213



SALES TRENDS

What percent of your gross annual sales were from the following categories?

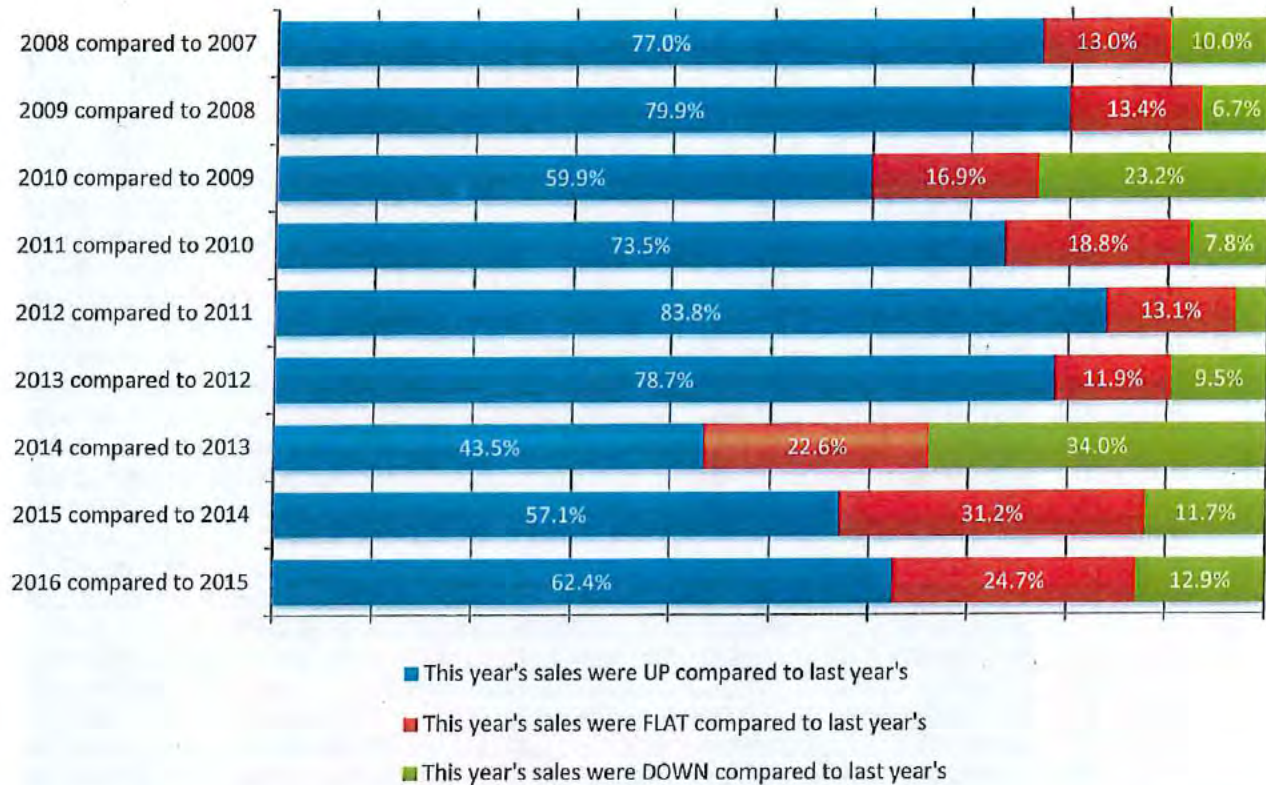


	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
New firearms	33.8%	42.8%	46.5%	50.1%	49.4%	47.5%	41.2%	38.2%	41.8%	199
Ammunition	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13.7%	12.5%	12.7%	185
*Hard goods	14.9%	18.0%	15.1%	14.6%	15.3%	16.0%	12.5%	11.7%	13.0%	150
Used firearms	14.9%	18.6%	19.8%	20.9%	15.5%	12.9%	11.5%	11.6%	10.2%	170
Products not related to hunting and shooting	24.2%	9.3%	9.8%	7.4%	10.0%	12.8%	11.3%	14.1%	13.2%	92
Soft goods	4.1%	7.9%	5.7%	5.9%	6.7%	6.4%	6.3%	7.8%	5.7%	116
Archery and bowhunting	8.1%	3.4%	3.1%	1.1%	3.1%	4.4%	3.4%	4.2%	3.4%	100

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 206

*Hard Goods includes such items as cases, cleaning kits, accessories but does not including firearms and ammunition.

Total sales compared to the previous year:



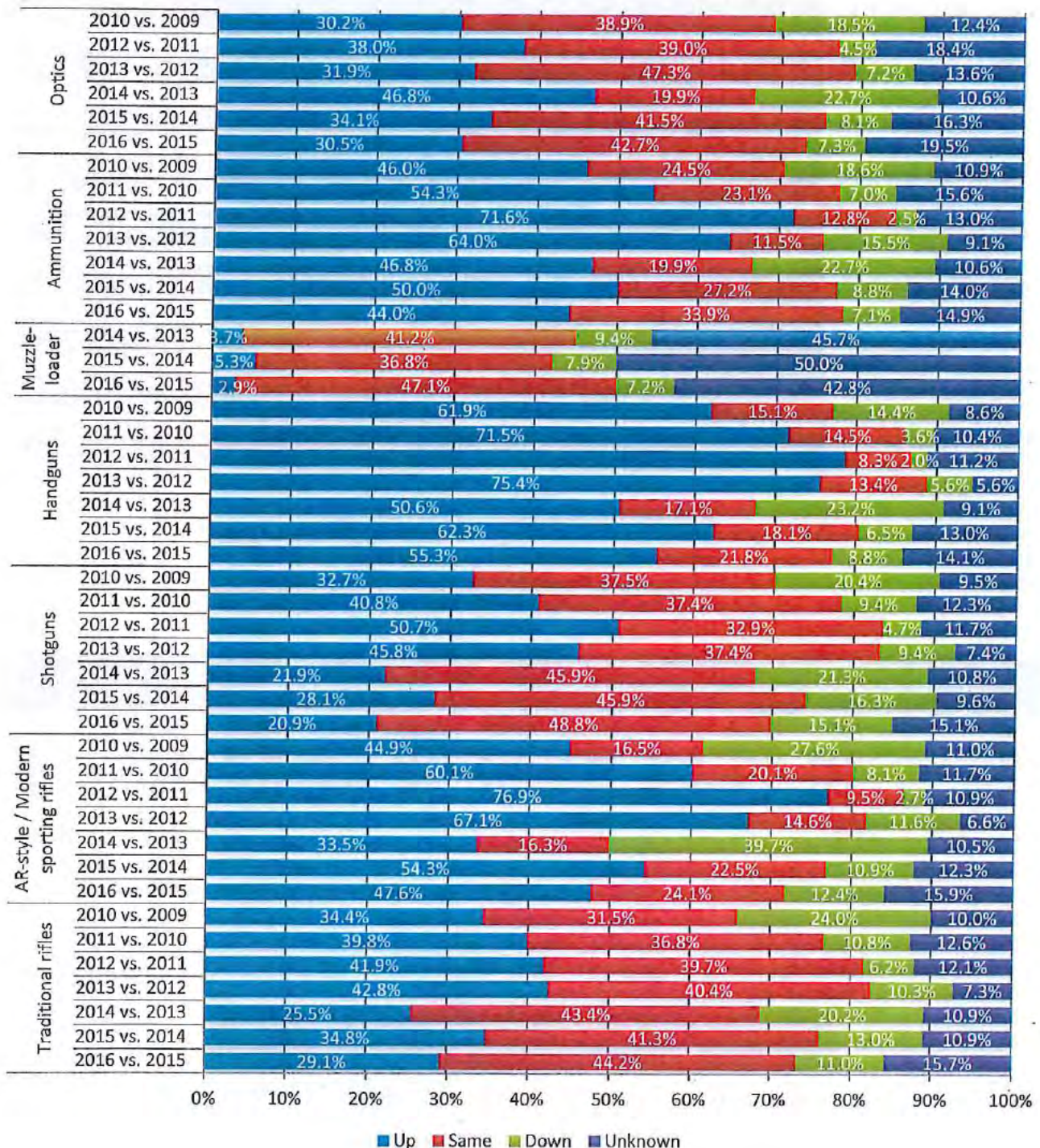
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Up	76.5%	79.9%	59.9%	73.5%	83.8%	78.7%	43.5%	57.1%	62.4%	116
Flat	13.5%	13.4%	16.9%	18.8%	13.1%	11.9%	22.6%	31.2%	24.7%	46
Down	10.0%	6.7%	23.2%	7.8%	3.1%	9.5%	34.0%	11.7%	12.9%	24

Total number of responses in 2016: n = 186

What was the average change of total sales compared to the previous year?

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Avg. Increase	39.9%	37.2%	36.1%	34.8%	113
Avg. Decrease	29.3%	26.6%	23.7%	19.8%	24

Please compare your sales this year to your sales last year in the following categories listed below. For each category please say whether sales were UP or DOWN.

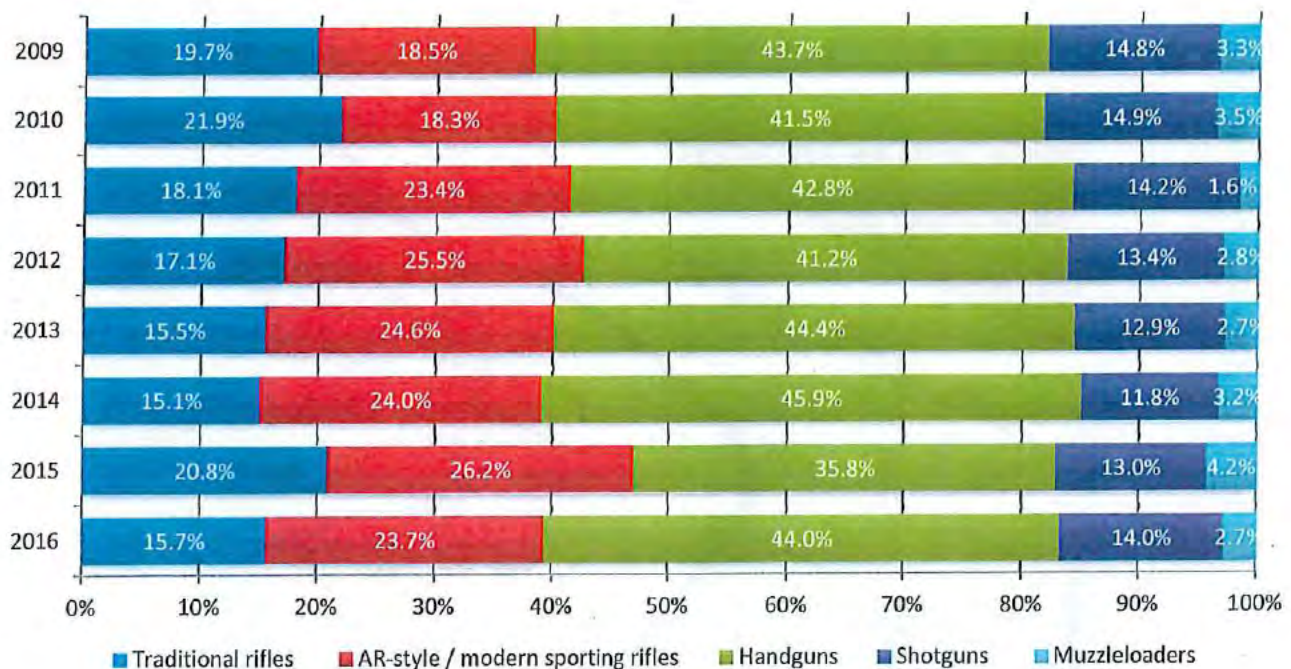


Total responses for 2016: Optics (164); Ammunition (168); Muzzleloaders (138); Handguns (170); Shotguns (172); AR-Style rifles (170); Traditional rifles (172).

What were your total sales of shooting and hunting-related items only, including firearms, ammo, accessories, apparel, etc.?

Year	Average Total Sales
2008	\$642,992
2009	\$858,314
2010	\$2,458,546
2011	\$756,019
2012	\$1,072,037
2013	\$1,047,802
2014	\$2,950,450
2015	\$1,490,824
2016	\$2,596,761
# of 2016 Responses	161

Of all your FIREARM sales last year, please estimate the percentage of sales dollars attributable to each type of firearm:



Total responses in 2016: Traditional rifles (172); AR-style rifles (168); Handguns (172); Shotguns (158); Muzzleloaders (81).

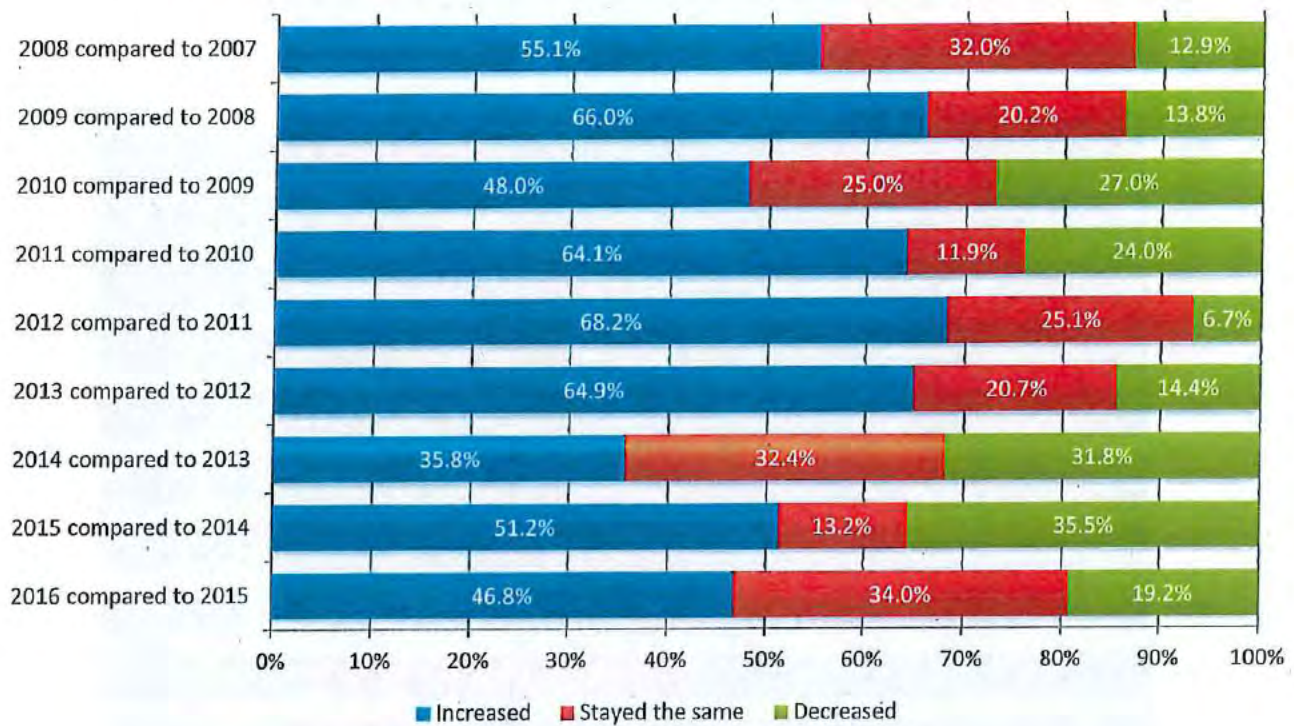
SALES MARGINS and NET PROFIT

What is your average margin on the sale of NEW and USED firearms?

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Number of 2016 responses
NEW Firearms	16.1%	16.2%	18.4%	17.6%	15.4%	15.6%	14.6%	
Handguns	16.5%	17.7%	18.9%	18.0%	16.0%	16.0%	15.9%	151
Rifles	16.2%	15.9%	19.1%	17.6%	16.8%	16.8%	15.7%	149
Shotguns	15.8%	14.9%	17.2%	17.1%	15.4%	15.4%	15.6%	144
Muzzleloaders	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.1%	12.1%	9.0%	89
USED Firearms	24.9%	23.5%	24.5%	26.2%	22.2%	22.5%	22.1%	
Handguns	26.2%	24.8%	26.0%	26.6%	24.8%	24.8%	25.7%	133
Rifles	24.5%	23.3%	24.7%	26.4%	23.8%	23.8%	24.0%	128
Shotguns	24.1%	22.5%	22.9%	25.5%	22.4%	22.4%	23.5%	126
Muzzleloaders	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	14.2%	14.2%	10.9%	79



Did your net profit increase, decrease or stay the same compared to the previous year?



Total number of responses in 2016: n = 156

Estimated changes in net profit (for those who reported an increase or decrease).

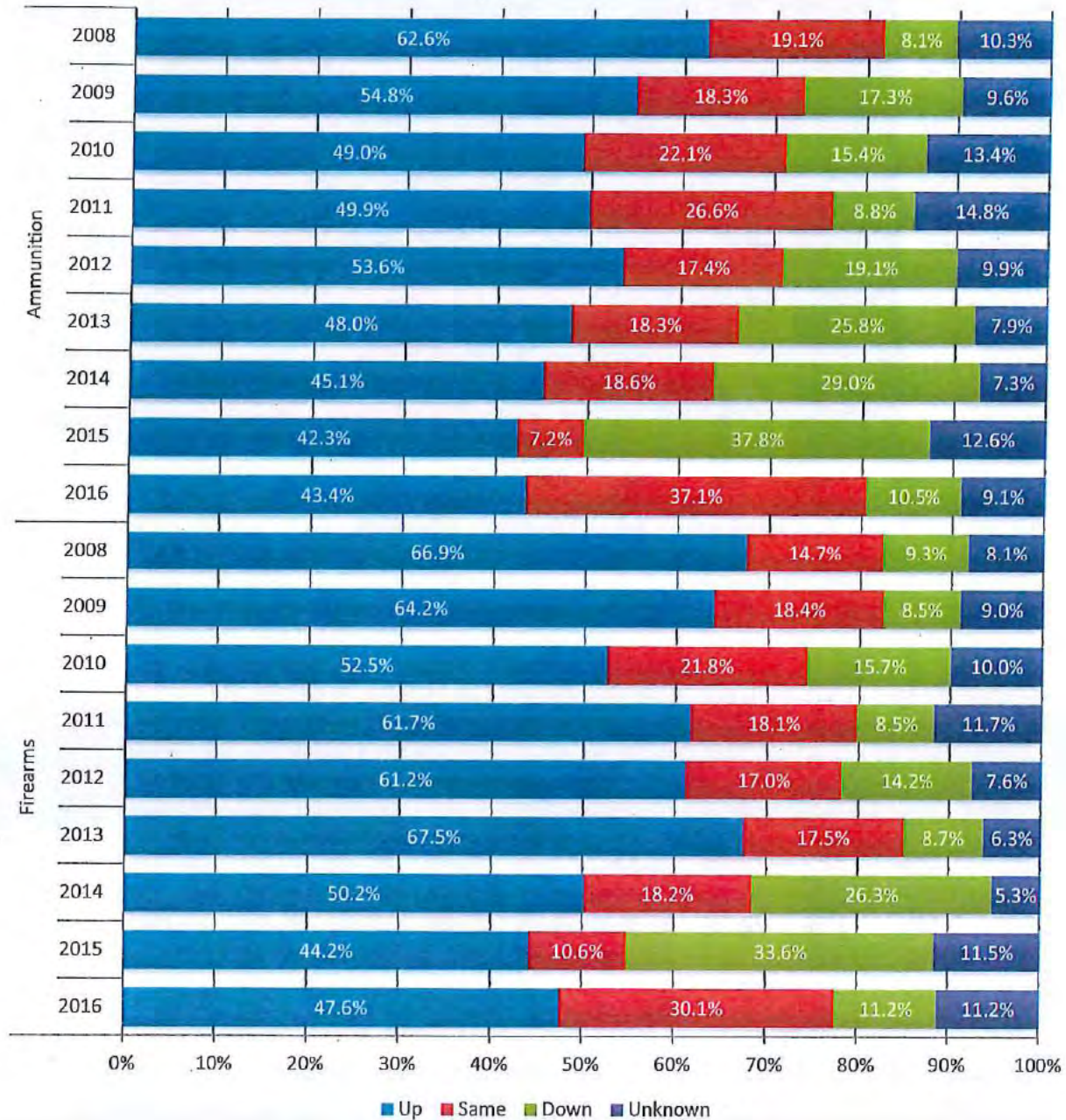
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Average Increase	20%	26%	29.4%	34.4%	33.1%	32.2%	32.7%	22.9%	23.1%	72
Average Decrease	16%	18%	22.7%	19.8%	18.6%	25.0%	22.0%	21.9%	20.7%	30

On average, what is your credit card processing transaction fee percentage?
(calculated by the credit card total fee / gross sales on credit and debit)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	# of 2016 Respondents
Average Increase	2.6%	2.7%	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%	152

INVENTORY

What was your percentage change in annual inventory from last year to this year for ammunition and firearms?



(continued) What was your percentage change in annual inventory from last year to this year for ammunition and firearms?

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Ammunition	Up	62.6%	54.8%	49.0%	49.9%	53.6%	48.0%	45.1%	42.3%	43.4%
	Same	19.1%	18.3%	22.1%	26.6%	17.4%	18.3%	18.6%	7.2%	37.1%
	Down	8.1%	17.3%	15.4%	8.8%	19.1%	25.8%	29.0%	37.8%	10.5%
	Unknown	10.3%	9.6%	13.4%	14.8%	9.9%	7.9%	7.3%	12.6%	9.1%
Firearms	Up	66.9%	64.2%	52.5%	61.7%	61.2%	67.5%	50.2%	44.2%	47.6%
	Same	14.7%	18.4%	21.8%	18.1%	17.0%	17.5%	18.2%	10.6%	30.1%
	Down	9.3%	8.5%	15.7%	8.5%	14.2%	8.7%	26.3%	33.6%	11.2%
	Unknown	8.1%	9.0%	10.0%	11.7%	7.6%	6.3%	5.3%	11.5%	11.2%

Total number of respondents for FIREARMS (2016): 143

Total number of respondents for AMMUNITION (2016): 143

ie. 43.4% of responding retailers said their ammunition inventory was up in 2016 over 2015.

What was the percentage change in your total inventory for each category of ammunition, based on dollar value?

		2015	2016	# Of 2016 Respondents
Centerfire Pistol	Average Increase	16.1%	15.4%	61
	Average Decrease	24.4%	13.7%	14
Centerfire Rifle	Average Increase	20.0%	15.8%	47
	Average Decrease	15.6%	25.8%	28
Component Bullets	Average Increase	15.8%	14.9%	31
	Average Decrease	13.8%	18.5%	20
Rimfire	Average Increase	25.5%	21.3%	45
	Average Decrease	38.6%	23.4%	24
Shotshells	Average Increase	10.7%	17.2%	30
	Average Decrease	39.7%	18.8%	37

SELECTED OPERATING MEASURES

NOTE: The following tables are based on a subset of respondents who provided complete information for sales, inventory, square footage, and cost of goods sold.

What was the average value (replacement value, not retail value) of your annual inventory on hand for shooting- and hunting-related merchandise only, including firearms, ammo, accessories, apparel, etc.)?

	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Retailers less than \$1 million	\$111,800	\$156,800	\$104,700	90
Retailers more than \$1 million	\$2,240,800	\$3,314,000	\$4,137,500	*11

*Sample size of retailers \$1 million + is small (11), use results with caution.

What was your total cost of goods sold annually for shooting- and hunting-related merchandise, including firearms, ammo, accessories, apparel, etc.?

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Retailers less than \$1 million	\$153,300	\$142,500	\$185,500	\$192,700	\$171,400	\$256,300	\$128,100	92
Retailers more than \$1 million	\$5,608,900	\$2,278,100	\$3,966,500	\$2,812,800	\$5,583,600	\$4,459,400	\$4,532,400	*11

*Sample size of retailers \$1 million + is small (11), use results with caution.

What was the total square footage of retail space dedicated to shooting- and hunting-related items only, as of December 31?

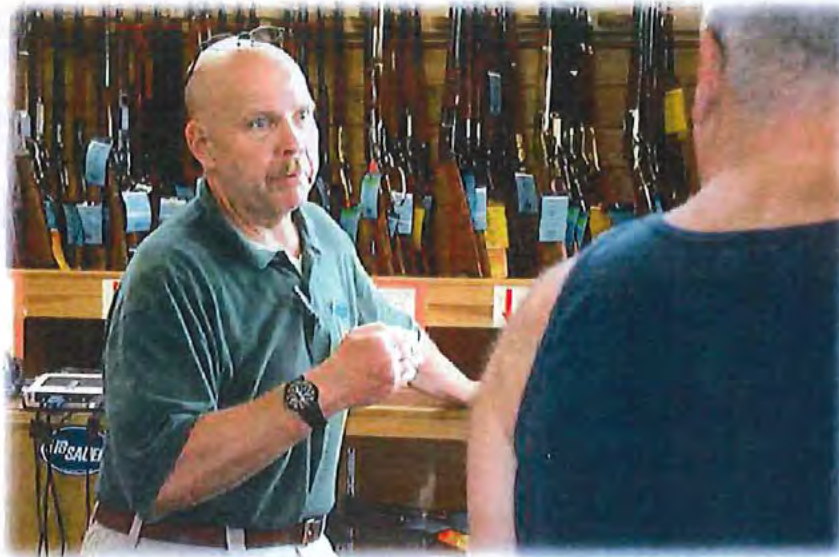
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Retailers less than \$1 million	1,359	1,232	1,418	1,595	1,247	1,827	1,895	41
Retailers more than \$1 million	9,012	6,552	7,033	5,437	6,756	4,461	13,187	*11

* Sample size of retailers \$1 million + is small (11), use results with caution.

Please tell us how many full-time employees your store had in 2016 for hunting and shooting related merchandise including firearms, ammunition, etc.

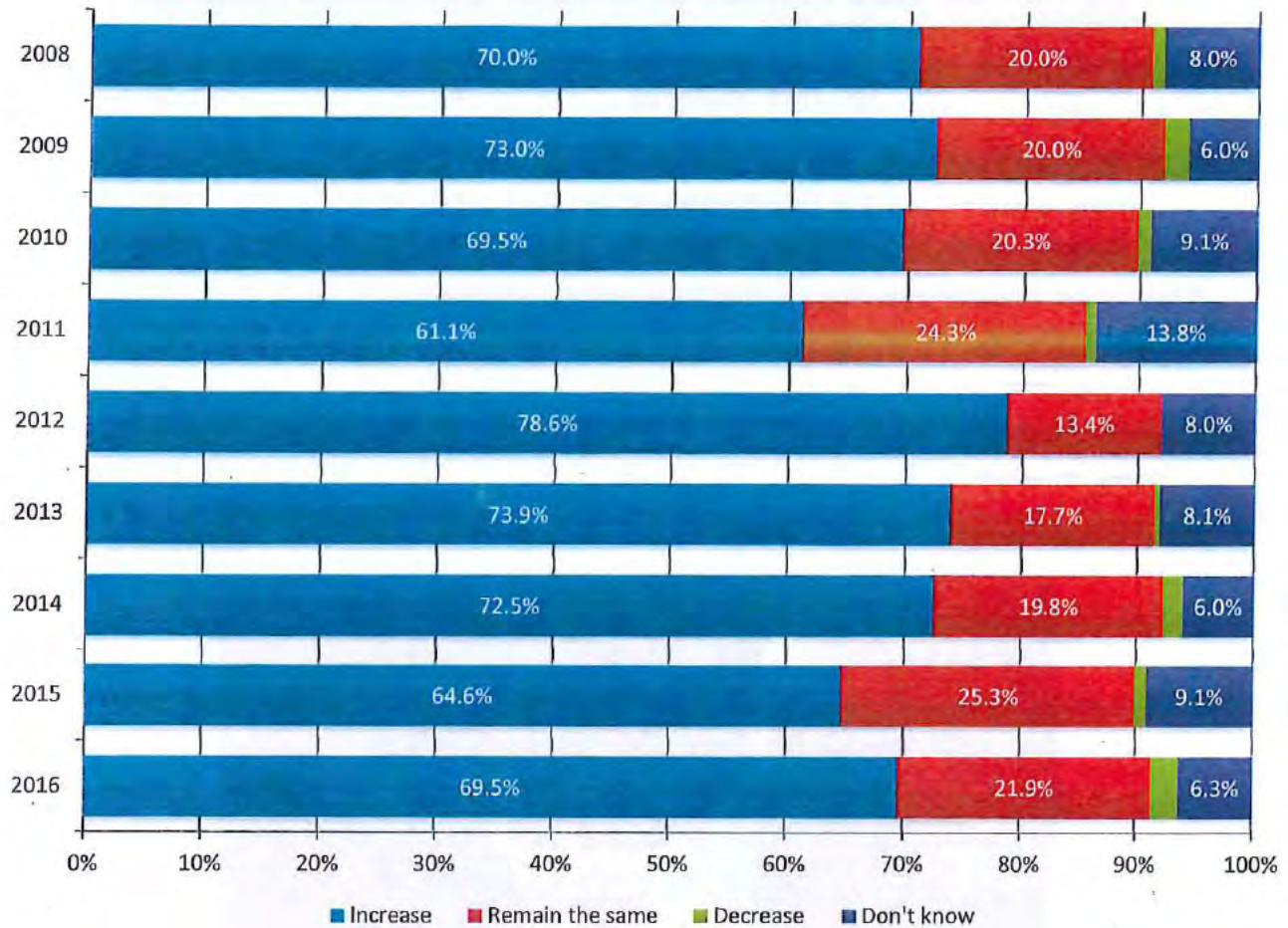
	2016	Responses (2016)
Retailers more than \$1 million		
Full Time Employees	21.7	*9
Part Time Employees	8.7	*9
Retailers less than \$1 million		
Full Time Employees	1.9	103
Part Time Employees	1.4	103

* Sample size of retailers \$1 million + is small (9), use results with caution.



Markets and Customers

In your opinion, has the number of female customers in your store increased or decreased?



	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Increase	70.0%	73.0%	69.5%	61.1%	78.6%	73.9%	72.5%	64.6%	69.5%	89
Remain the same	20.0%	20.0%	20.3%	24.3%	13.4%	17.7%	19.8%	25.3%	21.9%	28
Decrease	1.0%	2.0%	1.1%	0.8%	0.0%	0.4%	1.7%	1.0%	2.3%	3
Don't know	8.0%	6.0%	9.1%	13.8%	8.0%	8.1%	6.0%	9.1%	6.3%	8

Total number of responses in 2016: n = 128

I.e. 69.5% of reporting retailers noticed an increase in female customers in 2016 over 2015.

In your opinion, what percentage of your shooting- and hunting-related sales revenue do you attribute to female customers?

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
% of sales revenue	16.9%	15.4%	19.1%	19.4%	20.3%	19.5%	18.6%	22.6%

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 120

In your opinion, what type of firearm did female buyers purchase most often?

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Semi-automatic handgun	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	112
Revolver	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.3	2.1	93
AR platform (MSR) rifle	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.9	3.2	78
Shotgun	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.1	3.7	80
Traditional rifle	4.0	4.1	4.2	3.6	4.2	75
Muzzleloader	5.6	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.8	50

These results show how firearms retailers rank the observed preferences of female firearm buyers for given types of firearm on a scale of 1 (very likely) to 6 (not likely at all). For instance, the average respondent suggested that female hunters/shooters who purchased firearms from their business in 2016 most likely purchased a semi-automatic handgun (average rank of 1.3 out of 6), and was least likely to purchase a muzzleloader (average rank of 5.8 out of 6).



In your opinion, what percent of your customers in 2016 were first-time gun buyers?

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
% of all customers who were first time gun buyers	20.8%	25.0%	25.8%	25.3%	24.8%	24%	24.0%
Total number of responses for 2016: n = 159							

In your opinion, what type of firearm did first-time buyers purchase most often?

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Semi-automatic handgun	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	136
AR platform (MSR) rifle	3.0	2.9	3.7	3.0	2.7	2.6	115
Revolver	3.0	2.8	1.9	2.7	3.0	3.1	110
Shotgun	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	112
Traditional rifle	3.8	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.7	4.0	107
Muzzleloader	5.8	5.6	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.7	71

These results show how firearms retailers rank the observed preferences of first time firearm buyers for given types of firearm on a scale of 1 (very likely) to 6 (not likely at all). For instance, the average respondent suggested that first time gun buyer who purchased firearms from their business in 2016 was more likely to purchase a revolver (average rank of 3.1 out of 6), than a traditional rifle (average rank of 4.0 out of 6).

To the best of your knowledge, what was your total customer demographic in 2016?

	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Male	75.2%	76.9%	74.7%	25
Female	24.8%	23.1%	25.3%	20
White	69.4%	72.0%	72.0%	22
Black	11.3%	9.5%	11.0%	8
Hispanic	11.7%	10.9%	12.3%	10
Asian	7.6%	7.6%	4.6%	5
White Male	55.5%	57.3%	56.6%	12
White Female	13.9%	14.8%	15.4%	10
Black Male	7.1%	6.4%	6.9%	5
Black Female	4.2%	3.0%	4.1%	3
Hispanic Male	7.8%	7.5%	7.4%	6
Hispanic Female	3.9%	3.4%	4.9%	4
Asian Male	4.8%	5.7%	3.7%	2
Asian Female	2.8%	1.9%	0.9%	3

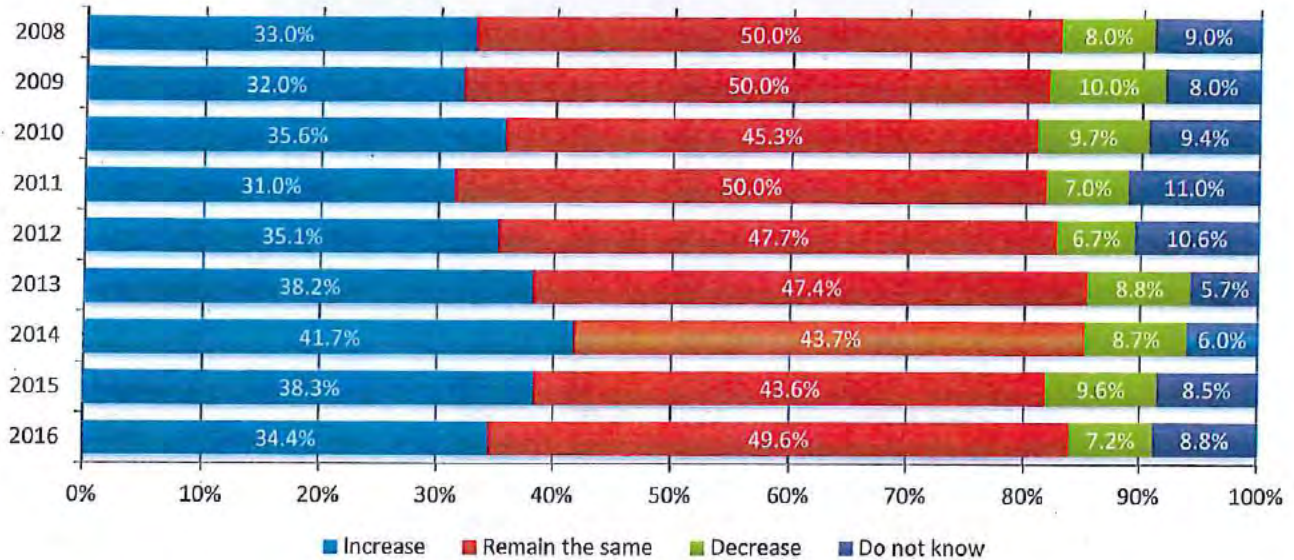
Do you have a system you use to collect demographic information (age, gender, race/ethnicity) on your customers?

	2016
Yes	10.9%
No	89.1%

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 128

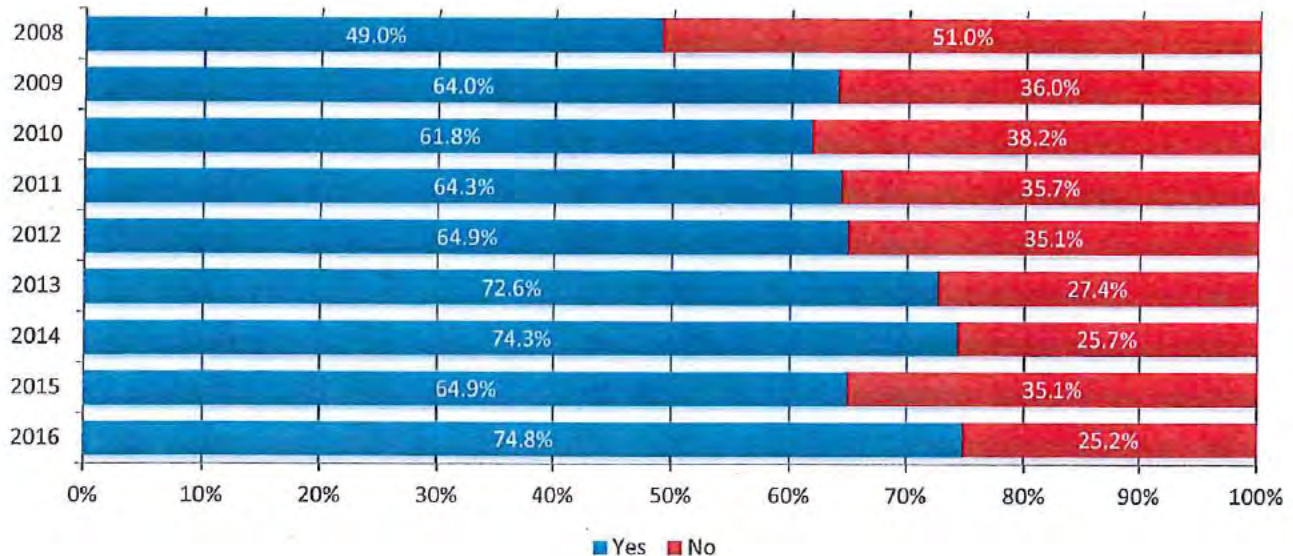
ADVERTISING and ONLINE MARKETING

Did your marketing/advertising expenditures (actual \$\$ spent) increase, decrease or remain the same?



Total number of responses for 2016: n = 125

Does your business currently have a website?



Total number of responses for 2016: n = 127

Do you sell any hunting and shooting-related products via the Internet?

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Yes	49.0%	64.0%	50.4%	49.9%	48.7%	52.3%	53.8%	40.0%	53.2%
No	51.0%	36.0%	49.6%	50.1%	51.3%	47.7%	46.2%	60.0%	46.8%

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 126

This year, did your online sales increase or decrease? *(asked of those that do have a website)*

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Increase	64.0%	65.0%	55.3%	64.6%	68.8%	59.3%	59.3%	52.6%	46.2%
Stay the same	7.0%	7.0%	11.4%	7.2%	5.3%	30.3%	10.3%	13.2%	10.8%
Decrease	28.0%	28.0%	33.3%	28.2%	26.0%	10.3%	30.3%	34.2%	43.1%

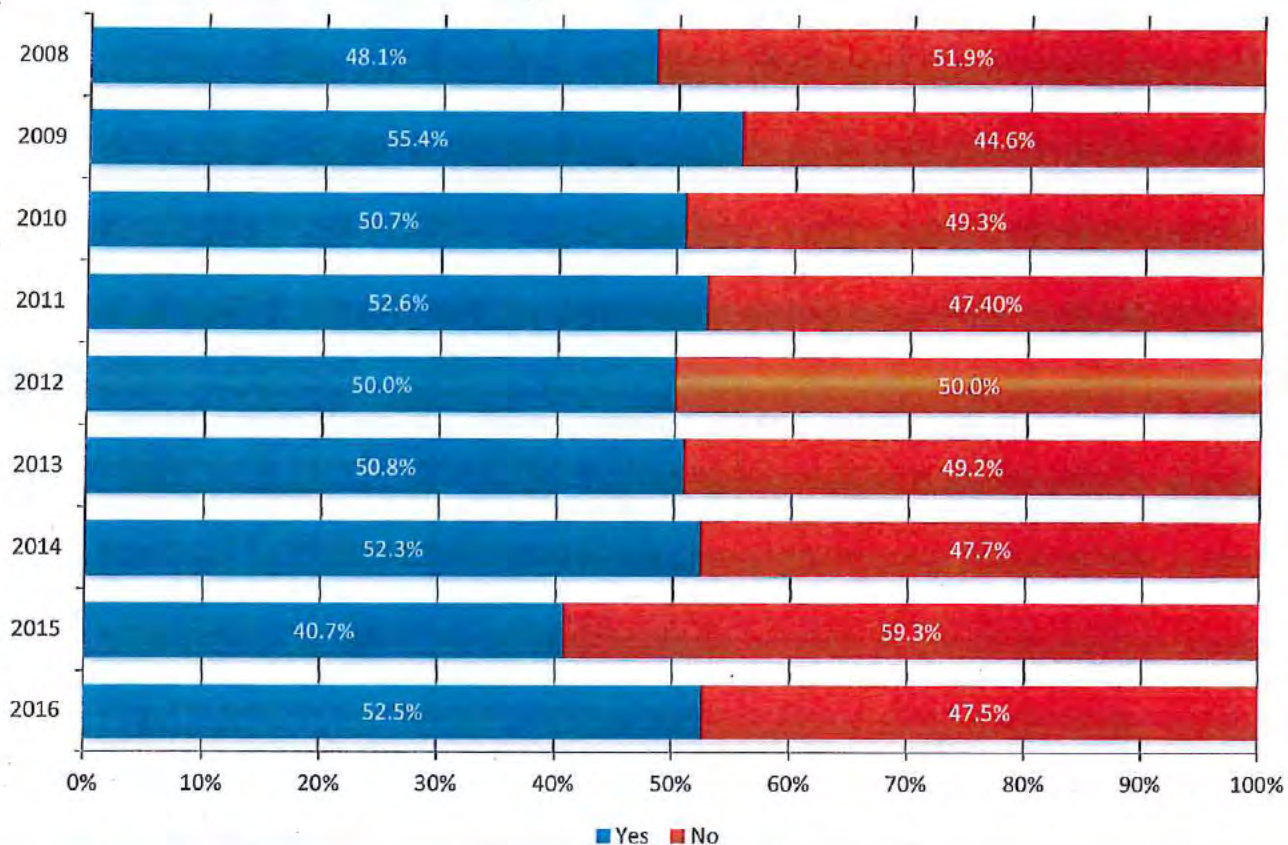
Total number of responses for 2016: n = 65

Please estimate as best as possible the percentage of annual shooting and hunting-related sales revenues that were generated online:

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
% sales revenue generated online	22.5%	34.0%	35.5%	32.3%	29.8%	26.6%	31.9%	24.1%

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 60

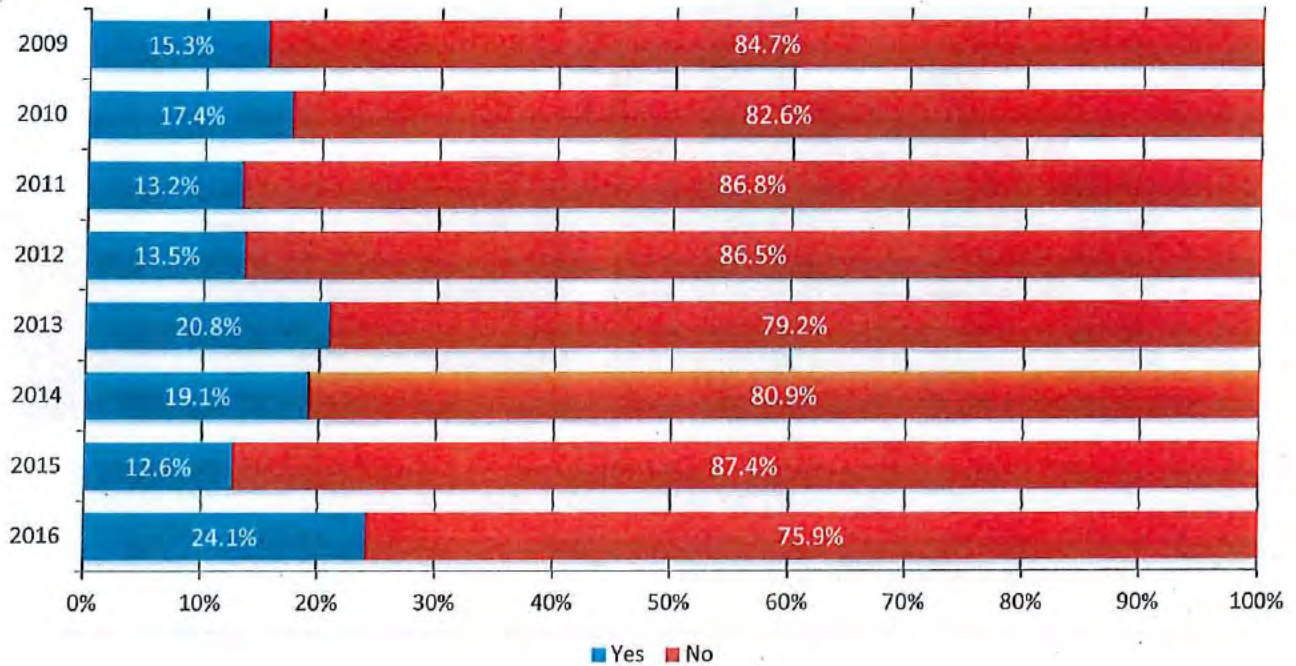
If you are not currently selling hunting and shooting products online, do your future business plans include selling online?



Total number of responses for 2016: n = 59

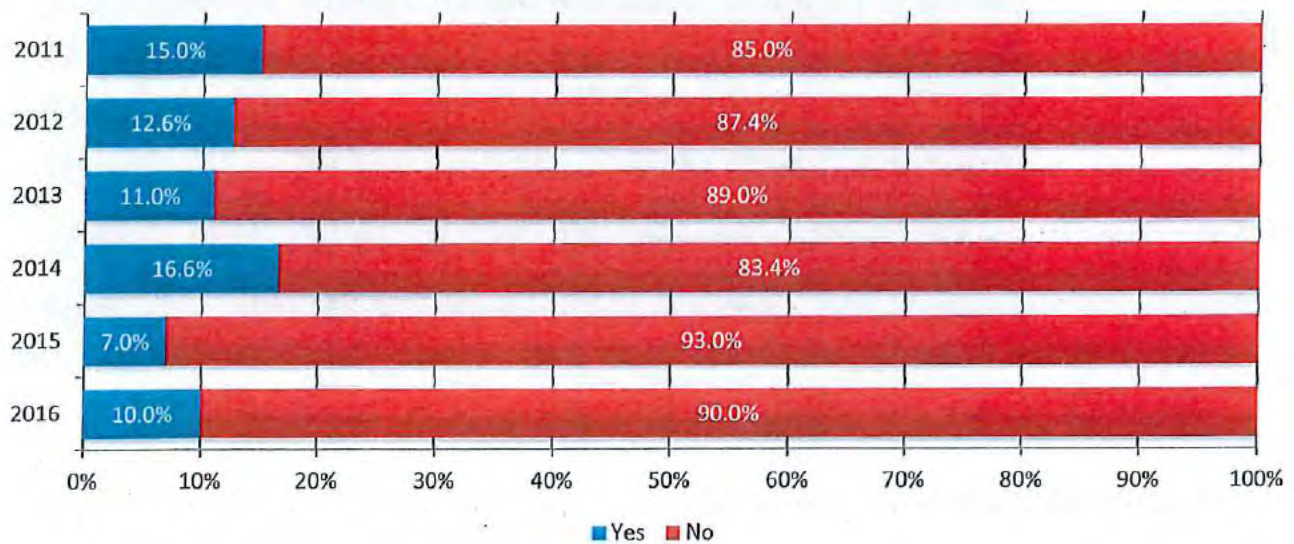
SHOOTING RANGES AND OTHER OFFERINGS

Do you have an active shooting range on-site?



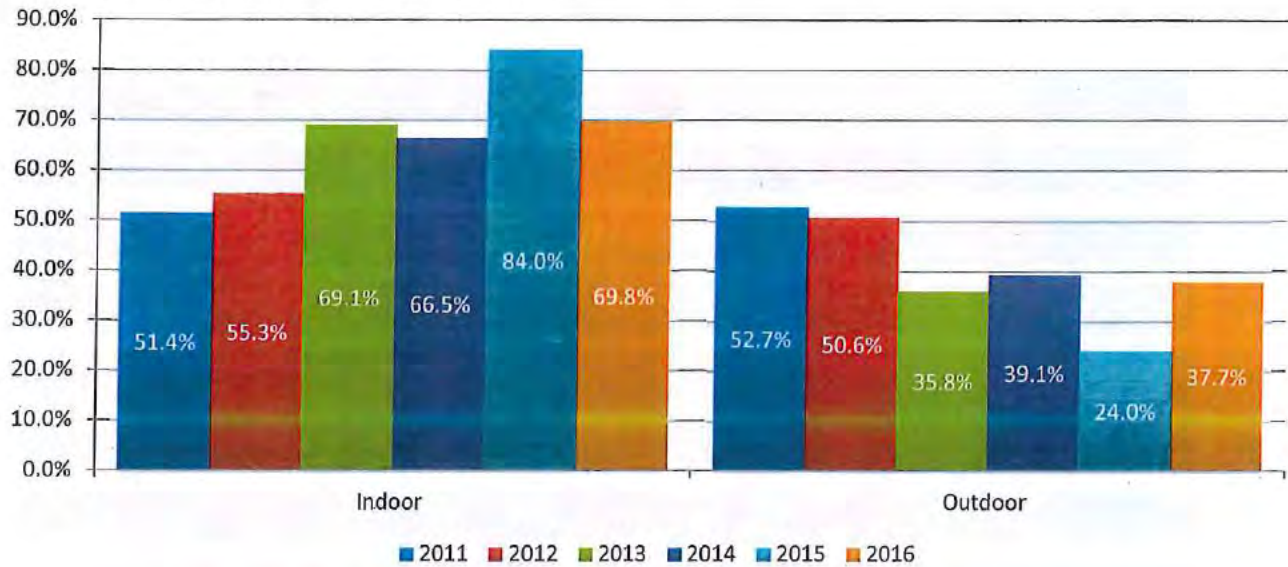
Total number of responses for 2016: n = 220

If no, do you have any plans to open a shooting range [next year]?



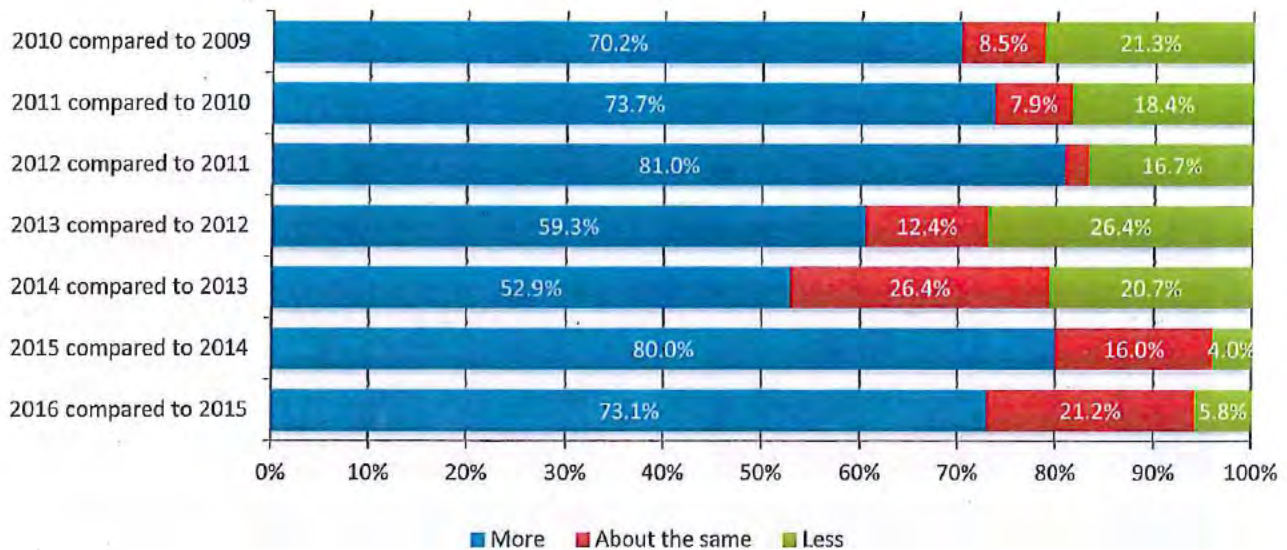
Total number of responses for 2016: n = 160

Please check which type of range(s) you have on-site: (Asked of those who indicated that they do have an active shooting range on site)



Total number of responses for 2016: n = 53

Please describe customer range traffic in 2016 compared to 2015?



Total number of responses for 2016: n = 52

Which, if any, of the following general firearm instruction classes do you offer?
(select all that apply)

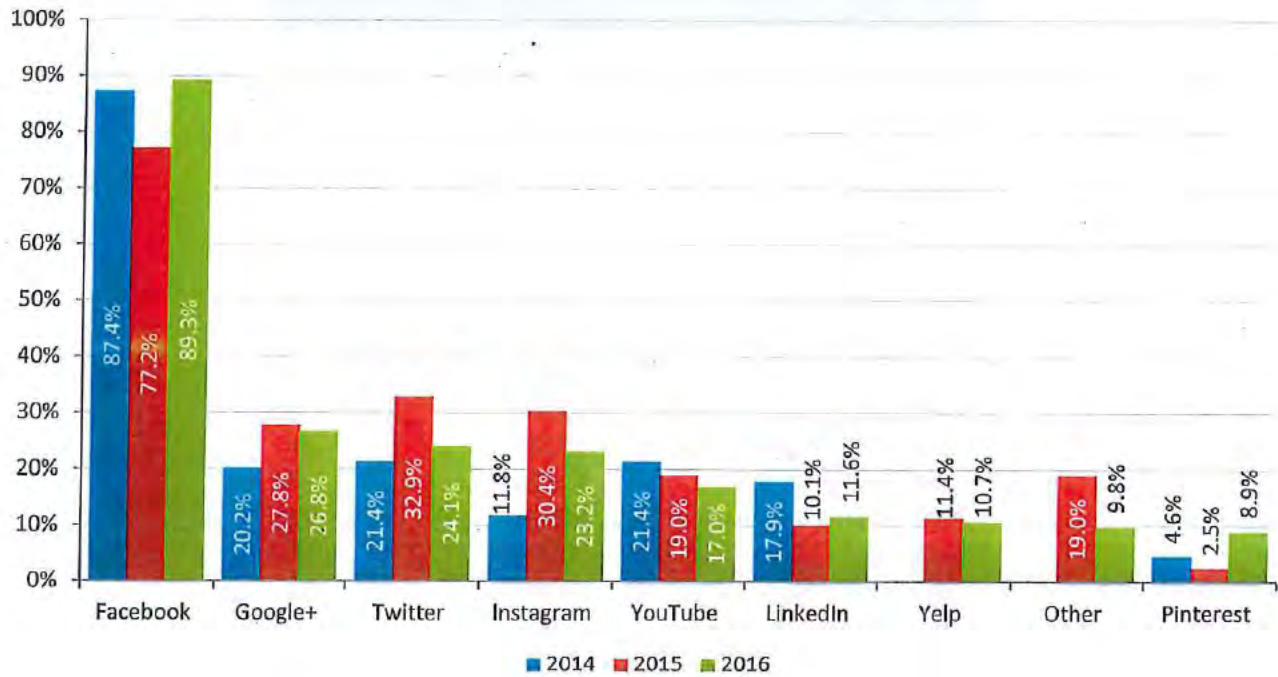
Class	2016	Responses (2016)
Concealed Carry	45.4%	94
Basic Pistol	44.4%	92
Basic Rifle	31.9%	66
Self-Defense	30.9%	64
Women Only	29.5%	61
Advanced Pistol Shooting	27.5%	57
Basic Shotgun	25.1%	52
Hunter Education	19.3%	40
Advanced Rifle Shooting	18.8%	39
Youth Classes	18.8%	39
Tactical	17.4%	36
Advanced Shotgun Shooting	14.5%	30
Gunsmithing	12.6%	26
Close Quarters Combat	10.6%	22
Reloading	9.7%	20
Vehicle Defense	5.8%	12
Other	2.4%	5
We do not offer any firearm-related classes	41.1%	85

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 207



SOCIAL MEDIA AND CURRENT ISSUES

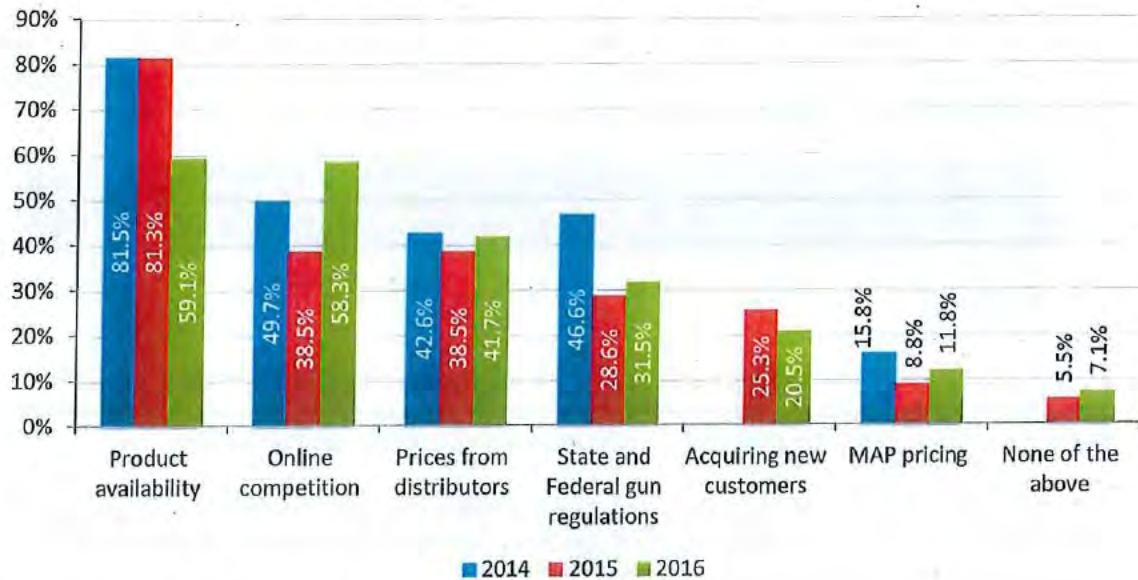
Which social media platforms does your store use to communicate with customers?



Social Media Platform	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Facebook	87.4%	77.2%	89.3%	100
Google+	20.2%	27.8%	26.8%	30
Twitter	21.4%	32.9%	24.1%	27
Instagram	11.8%	30.4%	23.2%	26
YouTube	21.4%	19.0%	17.0%	19
LinkedIn	17.9%	10.1%	11.6%	13
Yelp	n/a	11.4%	10.7%	12
Pinterest	4.6%	2.5%	8.9%	10
Other	n/a	19.0%	9.8%	11

Total number of responses in 2016: n = 112

What issues are negatively impacting your business the most? (Please select the top 3)



Total number of responses in 2016: n = 127

	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Product availability	81.5%	81.3%	59.1%	75
Online competition	49.7%	38.5%	58.3%	74
Prices from distributors	42.6%	38.5%	41.7%	53
State and Federal gun regulations	46.6%	28.6%	31.5%	40
Acquiring new customers	n/a	25.3%	20.5%	26
MAP pricing	15.8%	8.8%	11.8%	15
None of the above	n/a	5.5%	7.1%	9

BACKGROUND CHECKS AND OPERATING SYSTEMS

What percent of firearms sales (if any) in your store(s) use the approved alternate permits (such as concealed carry license) when completing a firearm sale? In other words, out of 100 firearms sold, what percent do not utilize the NICS system?

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Average response	21.7%	45.0%	43.0%	30.7%	43.0%	87

This question asked only of retailers located in the following states where an alternative to NICS is permitted: Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

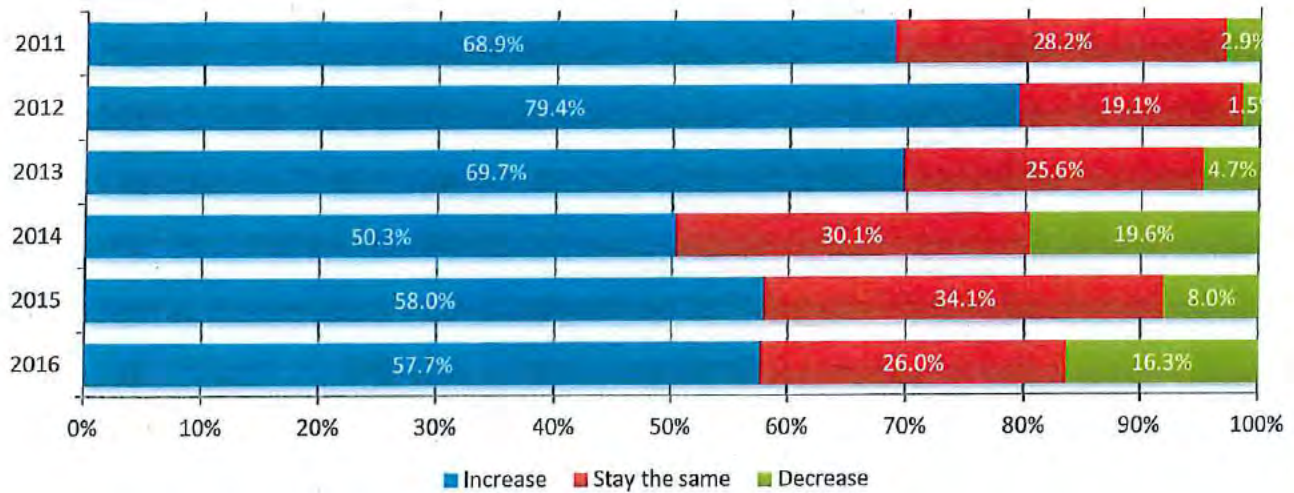
Alternate permit data can vary greatly by state and by retailer. Changes to the Brady Law and different uses of alternatives to NICS by state and by retailer mean that this data should be considered an estimate and caution is advised in making projections from it.

For additional information on alternate permits visit:
<https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/brady-law>

Approximately what percent of total NICS background checks conducted by your store are for Private Party Transfers?

Percentage	2016	# of 2016 Respondents
0%	26.6%	21
1% to 10%	50.7%	40
11% to 20%	3.8%	3
21% to 30%	6.3%	5
31% to 40%	3.8%	3
51% to 60%	2.5%	2
61% to 70%	1.3%	1
91% to 100%	2.5%	2
Don't Know	2.5%	2
Total Responses (2016)		79

Have you seen an increase or decrease in completed Form 4473?



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Responses (2016)
Increase	68.9%	79.4%	69.7%	50.3%	58.0%	57.7%	71
Stay the same	28.2%	19.1%	25.6%	30.1%	34.1%	26.0%	32
Decrease	2.9%	1.5%	4.7%	19.6%	8.0%	16.3%	20

Total number of responses for 2016: n = 123

To the best of your recollection, on average how many firearms are sold per completed Form 4473?

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	# 2016 Responses
Average number of firearms sold per completed form 4473	1.8	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1	87



11 Mile Hill Road
Newtown, CT 06470-2359
T: 203.426.1320
F: 203.426.1087
nssf.org

Item # 30383-17