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U.S. beer sales fell 3.3% in the four weeks ending Oct. 17

NIQ said volume dropped 5.0%, with softer consumer interest accounting for 76% of the category’s decline before the holidays

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U.S. beer sales stayed in decline in the four weeks ending Oct. 17, with weaker consumer demand continuing to weigh on the category as retailers move toward the holiday season, according to NIQ’s October 2026 Beer Pulse report.

NIQ said dollar sales for beer fell 3.3% in the period, while volume dropped 5.0%. The report, which covers total beer and excludes flavored malt beverages and hard seltzer, said softer consumer interest accounted for 76% of the decline. Distribution losses made up another 22%, suggesting that lower demand, more than shelf availability, remained the main drag on sales.

The weekly reading in the report also showed more slippage. Beer sales for the latest week totaled $856.0 million, down 2.3% from $876.5 million the previous week. NIQ said the category is still struggling against reduced consumption as it looks for momentum before holiday gatherings and year-end promotions.

Beer’s largest segments remained under pressure, although some posted smaller losses than in earlier readings. Domestic Premium recorded the sharpest declines among major segments, with dollar sales down 7.3% and volume down 8.4%. Craft beer also remained weak, with dollars down 4.9% and volume down 6.5%.

Imports, a category that has been more resilient than much of the domestic market, still declined but at a slower rate. NIQ reported import beer sales were down 1.6% in dollars and 3.2% in volume. Domestic Super Premium, which had previously been growing, nearly flattened out, with dollar sales up 0.4% while volume slipped 0.1%.

The strongest results in the report came from categories that have continued to attract consumers looking for alternatives to traditional beer. Cider sales strengthened, rising 5.4% in dollars and 3.9% in cases. Non-alcoholic beer also gained speed, with dollar sales up 7.3% and volume up 6.4%, extending one of the few clear growth trends in the broader beer space.

Among manufacturers, Anheuser-Busch remained the largest by dollar sales even as its sales fell 3.8% and its case volume dropped by 2.5 million. Constellation held the No. 2 spot, with dollar sales down 0.2% and case volume down 351,000. Molson Coors Beverage Co. ranked third, with dollar sales down 5.5% and volume off by 1.8 million cases, while Heineken USA was fourth after a 8.3% decline in dollar sales and a loss of 396,200 cases.

New Belgium Brewing stood out inside the top five manufacturers because it was the only one to post growth. NIQ said New Belgium’s dollar sales rose 6.8%, with case volume up 58,400. In a separate ranking of fastest-growing manufacturers by dollar sales, NIQ also cited Sapporo Breweries Ltd., where dollar sales rose 15.6%, Asahi Beer USA, where sales rose 25.3%, and Athletic Brewing Co., where sales rose 1.4%. Schilling Cider also appeared in that group based on case growth, although NIQ did not provide a comparable dollar growth figure for the company in the summary.

At the brand level, Modelo remained the top beer by dollar sales despite a 0.8% decline and a drop of 312,100 cases. Budweiser ranked second, but it posted the steepest drop among the top five brands, with dollar sales down 9.2% and case volume down 1.9 million. Michelob was third and one of the few major brands to grow, with dollar sales up 3.3% and case volume up 276,600.

Corona and Coors, the other brands in the top five by sales, both declined. Corona’s dollar sales fell 4.8%, with volume down 441,100 cases. Coors posted a 3.5% decline in dollar sales and lost 565,900 cases.

The strongest brand growth in the report came from Pacifico, whose dollar sales rose 22.7% and whose case volume increased by 322,200. Michelob also ranked near the top by dollar growth, followed by New Belgium, where sales rose 7.8%, Victoria, where sales were up 15.7%, and Angry Orchard, where sales increased 12.0%. The mix of winners in the report showed that while the overall beer category remained soft through Oct. 17, selected import, cider and non-alcoholic labels continued to draw spending even as many core beer segments lost ground.