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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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Releases

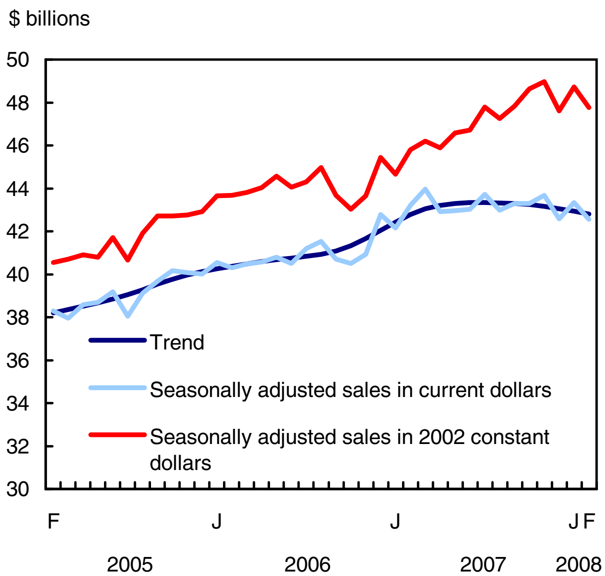
Releases

Wholesale trade

February 2008

After starting the year on a positive note, wholesale sales reversed course in February as declines in a number of sectors erased all of January's gains. Sales by Canadian wholesalers fell 1.8% in February to $42.6 billion.

Wholesale sales fall in February



Most sectors reported lower sales during the month, with the largest decline (-4.0%) coming in the automotive sector. There were also notable drops in the "other products" (-3.4%) sector, which includes wholesalers of agricultural chemicals, recycled materials, paper products and non-agricultural products, as well as the personal and household goods (-2.4%) and building materials (-2.2%) sectors.

The only two bright spots were the food, beverage and tobacco products sector (+0.7%), which was buoyed by a turnaround in alcohol and tobacco sales, and the farm products sector (+4.3%), which recovered from a weak start to the year.

Wholesale sales have been trending gradually downwards since July 2007, largely as a result of a significant decline in the automotive sector. Prior to this, sales had undergone a period of sustained growth that began in July 2003.

Note to readers

Unadjusted and seasonally adjusted monthly estimates in current dollars have been revised starting in January 1993. Factors influencing revisions include late receipt of respondent information, correction of information on data provided, the replacement of estimated figures with actual values (once available), the re-classification of companies within, into and out of the wholesale trade industry and updates to seasonal and trading day factors.

Estimates in constant prices have also been revised to incorporate the revision to the current dollar series for the period from 2002 to date.

The volume and price series for the period prior to 2002 will be made available at a later date.

The revised estimates are now available on CANSIM and by special request, and will also appear in the February 2008 issue of Wholesale Trade *(63-008-XWE, free).*

When measured in constant dollars, which removes price change effects to provide an indicator of volume, sales were 2.0% lower in February compared with a month earlier.

Automotive sector heads lower

Sales of automotive products fell 4.0% in February to $7.1 billion, their lowest level since July 2005. Motor vehicles dropped 4.8% and motor vehicle parts and accessories were down 1.1%.

This was the third consecutive monthly decline in motor vehicle sales following a substantial increase in November. Some of the recent decline can be explained by lower prices, as manufacturers took advantage of the strength of the Canadian dollar to offer attractive discounts on new vehicles sold in Canada. According to the Consumer Price Index, the average price to purchase or lease a vehicle fell 6.8% in February from a year earlier, which was the largest year-over-year monthly decline since 1956. The total value of motor vehicle sales has also been affected by a shift in consumer preferences to smaller more fuel efficient vehicles.

Sales of "other products" give back some of strong January gain

Wholesalers in the "other products" sector, gave back some of January's strong gain as sales fell 3.4% in February to $5.8 billion.

The decline was mostly the result of slower sales of agricultural chemicals, which were responsible for most of the surge in January. Nevertheless, with demand for these products continuing to grow, overall sales in the sector are still well ahead of those in the same period last year.

Personal and household goods sector down across the board

Sales in the personal and household goods sector ended a string of three consecutive monthly increases, falling 2.4% to $6.6 billion in February. All three components that make up this sector reported lower sales, led by the pharmaceutical products group (-2.5%). Receipts for household and personal products dropped 1.6%, while apparel was down 4.4%.

Ontario bears the brunt of February's decline

Ontario bore almost the entire brunt of the decline in February as sales in the province dropped 4.9% to $20.7 billion, their lowest level since October 2006.

Although most readily apparent in the automotive sector, the decline cut across a number of sectors in the province, including building materials, machinery and equipment and food, beverage and tobacco products.

Some unusual circumstances may have accentuated the decline in Ontario in February. The new Family Day holiday, which resulted in many businesses closing for the day, as well as a series of heavy winter storms that disrupted the flow of goods in the province, may have contributed to February's weak performance.

Saskatchewan was the only other province to post lower sales (-3.8%), but this followed a substantial increase in January. The drop was almost entirely attributable to a decline in the "other products" sector, which was behind the large increase in January.

On a more positive note, sales in Alberta rose (+2.3%) for the second month in a row following a brief setback in December. Improved performances in the automotive, "other product" and food, beverage and tobacco products sectors were behind much of the gain.

In Quebec, a healthy rise in sales of food products was the major factor behind a 1.9% increase in February.

Gains in the Atlantic provinces were concentrated in Newfoundland and Labrador (+9.1%), which also benefited from higher sales in the food products sector.

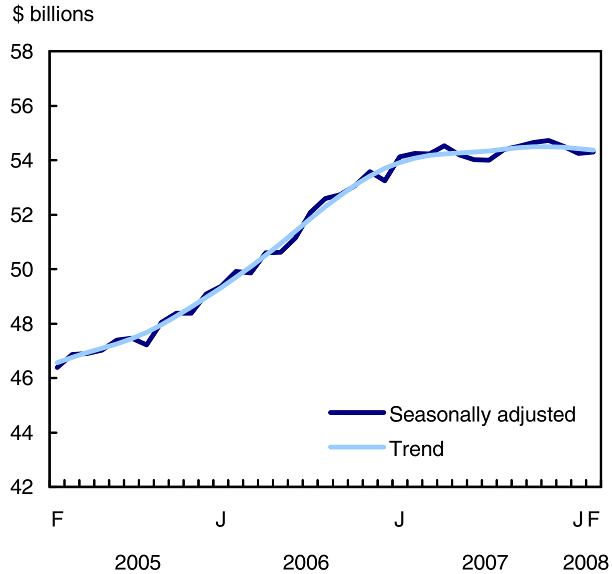
Inventory level little changed following two months of declines

Wholesalers continued to maintain a tight check on their inventories in February, as they remained essentially unchanged following two consecutive monthly declines.

Inventories edged up 0.1% in February to $54.3 billion, with 7 of 15 trade groups reporting higher levels.

In February, the most significant increases came in the motor vehicle, "other products" and pharmaceutical trade groups. These were almost entirely offset by drops in the metal products, lumber and millwork and apparel trade groups.

Inventories edge up following two months of declines



Inventory-to-sales ratio back up again

For the third month in a row, there was a significant change in the inventory-to-sales ratio. After dropping to 1.25 in January, the ratio headed back up to 1.28 in February, the same level as in December.

Although the ratio has been somewhat volatile of late, the overall trend has seen a slight decline since hitting its last peak in October 2006.

The inventory-to sales ratio is a measure of the time, in months, that would be required to exhaust inventories if sales were to remain at their current level.

Available on CANSIM: tables 081-0007 to 081-0010.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2401.

The February 2008 issue of *Wholesale Trade* (63-008-XWE, free) will soon be available.

Wholesale trade estimates for March will be released on May 20.

To obtain data or general information, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; *wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Marc Atkins (613-951-0291; *marc.atkins@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division.

Wholesale merchants' inventories and inventory-to-sales ratio

	February 2007	November 2007[r]	December 2007[r]	January 2008[r]	February 2008[p]	January to February 2008	February 2007 to February 2008	January 2008[r]	February 2008[p]
	Wholesale inventories							Inventory-to-sales ratio	
	Seasonally adjusted								
	$ millions					% change			
Inventories	**54,248**	**54,718**	**54,511**	**54,251**	**54,303**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**1.25**	**1.28**
Farm products	185	172	163	161	149	-7.6	-19.5	0.37	0.33
Food products	3,949	4,196	4,119	4,236	4,250	0.3	7.6	0.62	0.63
Alcohol and tobacco	280	323	318	351	341	-3.0	21.8	0.58	0.53
Apparel	1,614	1,814	1,802	1,801	1,777	-1.3	10.1	2.14	2.21
Household and personal products	3,781	4,178	4,054	4,021	4,035	0.4	6.7	1.46	1.49
Pharmaceuticals	3,288	3,537	3,557	3,571	3,620	1.4	10.1	1.14	1.18
Motor vehicles	5,352	4,633	4,645	4,542	4,598	1.2	-14.1	0.78	0.83
Motor vehicle parts and accessories	3,394	3,251	3,221	3,185	3,189	0.1	-6.1	2.10	2.12
Building supplies	5,829	5,982	6,114	6,014	6,012	0.0	3.1	1.59	1.63
Metal products	3,121	2,771	2,799	2,765	2,724	-1.5	-12.7	1.94	1.89
Lumber and millwork	1,272	1,164	1,137	1,120	1,096	-2.2	-13.9	1.15	1.21
Machinery and equipment	11,745	11,739	11,643	11,586	11,590	0.0	-1.3	2.54	2.51
Computer and other electronic equipment	1,699	1,725	1,659	1,640	1,618	-1.4	-4.8	0.61	0.62
Office and professional equipment	2,622	2,663	2,667	2,651	2,650	0.0	1.1	1.30	1.32
Other products	6,119	6,571	6,613	6,607	6,657	0.8	8.8	1.11	1.15

r *revised*
p *preliminary*
Note: *Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.*

Wholesale merchants' sales

	February 2007	November 2007r	December 2007r	January 2008r	February 2008p	January to February 2008	February 2007 to February 2008
	Seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Total, wholesale sales	**43,202**	**43,687**	**42,571**	**43,340**	**42,556**	**-1.8**	**-1.5**
Farm products	**482**	**443**	**447**	**431**	**450**	**4.3**	**-6.7**
Food, beverages and tobacco products	**7,292**	**7,525**	**7,341**	**7,389**	**7,441**	**0.7**	**2.0**
Food products	6,693	6,873	6,675	6,787	6,797	0.2	1.6
Alcohol and tobacco	599	653	666	603	643	6.7	7.4
Personal and household goods	**6,486**	**6,591**	**6,598**	**6,724**	**6,566**	**-2.4**	**1.2**
Apparel	793	798	809	842	805	-4.4	1.5
Household and personal products	2,810	2,795	2,744	2,749	2,706	-1.6	-3.7
Pharmaceuticals	2,883	2,999	3,045	3,133	3,055	-2.5	6.0
Automotive products	**8,338**	**8,044**	**7,341**	**7,345**	**7,051**	**-4.0**	**-15.4**
Motor vehicles	6,753	6,501	5,842	5,826	5,549	-4.8	-17.8
Motor vehicle parts and accessories	1,586	1,543	1,499	1,519	1,502	-1.1	-5.3
Building materials	**6,381**	**6,229**	**6,149**	**6,174**	**6,036**	**-2.2**	**-5.4**
Building supplies	3,770	3,772	3,740	3,774	3,693	-2.1	-2.0
Metal products	1,522	1,408	1,440	1,423	1,439	1.1	-5.4
Lumber and millwork	1,089	1,050	968	977	903	-7.6	-17.1
Machinery and electronic equipment	**9,057**	**9,405**	**9,177**	**9,310**	**9,247**	**-0.7**	**2.1**
Machinery and equipment	4,385	4,593	4,536	4,568	4,620	1.1	5.3
Computer and other electronic equipment	2,666	2,745	2,622	2,698	2,624	-2.8	-1.6
Office and professional equipment	2,006	2,067	2,019	2,044	2,004	-2.0	-0.1
Other products	**5,166**	**5,449**	**5,518**	**5,966**	**5,766**	**-3.4**	**11.6**
Total, excluding automobiles	**34,864**	**35,643**	**35,230**	**35,995**	**35,505**	**-1.4**	**1.8**
Sales, province and territory							
Newfoundland and Labrador	237	247	248	257	280	9.1	18.3
Prince Edward Island	41	40	36	38	39	1.7	-5.2
Nova Scotia	558	580	552	572	578	1.0	3.6
New Brunswick	425	429	433	428	428	0.0	0.7
Quebec	8,096	8,012	7,911	8,110	8,264	1.9	2.1
Ontario	22,056	22,085	21,485	21,728	20,662	-4.9	-6.3
Manitoba	1,013	1,082	1,014	1,105	1,113	0.7	9.8
Saskatchewan	1,158	1,305	1,281	1,433	1,379	-3.8	19.1
Alberta	5,105	5,288	5,184	5,259	5,377	2.3	5.3
British Columbia	4,454	4,538	4,353	4,345	4,360	0.4	-2.1
Yukon	10	17	11	12	15	18.2	45.5
Northwest Territories	46	59	60	52	58	12.6	25.1
Nunavut	3	3	3	3	3	1.9	-16.2

r *revised*
p *preliminary*
Note: *Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.*

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Leading indicators

March 2008

The composite leading index was unchanged in March, after a decline in February followed an increase in January. Of the 10 components, 6 rose in March, up from 4 the month before, as both housing and new orders for durable goods rebounded from large declines. Overall, household spending continued to lead growth, while the stock market replaced manufacturing as the weakest sector of the economy.

All the components related to household spending advanced. Outlays for durable goods posted a third straight gain, as auto sales remained on a strong upward trend. The housing index rebounded 0.2% after five straight declines.

Manufacturing remained mixed. Export demand continued to reel from declines in the United States, which was reflected in a seventh straight decline in its leading index. However, new orders rebounded 0.6%, helped by gains for investment goods and a partial recovery for autos. This gain in orders was not reflected in higher shipments, and this lowered the ratio of shipments to inventories for a second straight month.

The downward trend of the stock market deepened for a fifth straight month, and its 1.9% drop was the most of any component.

Available on CANSIM: table 377-0003.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 1601.

This release will be reprinted in the May 2008 issue of *Canadian Economic Observer*, Vol. 21, no. 5 (11-010-XWB, free). For more information on the economy, consult the *Canadian Economic Observer*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Philip Cross (613-951-9162; *ceo@statcan.ca*), Current Economic Analysis Group.

Leading indicators

	October 2007	November 2007	December 2007	January 2008	February 2008	March 2008	Last month of data available
							% change
Composite leading indicator (1992=100)	**229.1**	**228.9**	**228.4**	**228.6**	**228.1**	**228.1**	**0.0**
Housing index (1992=100)[1]	150.5	149.8	145.8	143.9	141.5	141.8	0.2
Business and personal services employment (thousands)	2,869	2,875	2,874	2,877	2,881	2,893	0.4
S&P/TSX stock price index (1975=1,000)	14,032	13,988	13,981	13,880	13,777	13,522	-1.9
Money supply, M1 ($ millions, 1992)[2]	168,100	168,850	169,576	170,276	170,623	171,434	0.5
US Conference Board leading indicator (1992=100)[3]	126.6	126.3	126.0	125.5	125.1	124.7	-0.3
Manufacturing							
Average workweek (hours)	38.4	38.4	38.3	38.2	38.1	38.1	0.0
New orders, durables ($ millions, 1992)[4]	26,680	26,218	25,996	26,813	25,954	26,121	0.6
Shipments/inventories of finished goods[4]	1.82	1.81	1.81	1.82	1.81	1.80	-0.01[5]
Retail trade							
Furniture and appliance sales ($ millions, 1992)[4]	2,715	2,726	2,745	2,776	2,790	2,808	0.6
Other durable goods sales ($ millions, 1992)[4]	9,291	9,295	9,258	9,276	9,391	9,499	1.2
Unsmoothed composite leading indicator	**228.9**	**228.0**	**226.5**	**229.6**	**227.6**	**229.0**	**0.6**

1. *Composite index of housing starts (units) and house sales (multiple listing service).*
2. *Deflated by the Consumer Price Index for all items.*
3. *The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for the month immediately preceding.*
4. *The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for the second preceding month.*
5. *Difference from previous month.*

■

Greenhouse, sod and nursery industries

2007

After a long period of continuous growth that started in 1990, greenhouse expansion stalled in 2007, as operators had to adapt to the rising value of the Canadian dollar and higher labour and energy costs.

Total greenhouse area under plastic and glass edged down less than 1% from a year earlier to approximately 20.9 million square metres in 2007.

Greenhouse operators reported total sales of $2.3 billion, up less than 1% compared with 2006. Producers of flowers and plants accounted for two-thirds of total greenhouse sales, but, for the first time since 1993, vegetable area, which was 10.7 million square metres, exceeded plant and flower area, which stood at 10.3 million square meters in 2007.

Canadian greenhouses employed approximately 42,000 workers in 2007.

Sales of flowers and plants increased 1.5% in 2007, with Ontario growers accounting for 52% of all flowers and plants sold by Canadian growers.

Greenhouse growers sold $806 million of vegetables in 2007, virtually unchanged from a year earlier, with tomatoes accounting for 44% of total vegetable sales. However, some producers switched production from tomatoes, with area planted falling by 3.7%, to peppers (+11.1%) and cucumbers (+3.6%).

Ontario continued to lead the provinces with 64% of Canadian greenhouse vegetable area, followed by British Columbia (24%).

The total nursery area increased 1.3% to 21,507 hectares in 2007 following two years of decline. Nursery sales increased 5.5% to $630 million, with sales to landscapers and garden centres accounting for 46% of total sales. The sod area increased 1.8% to 23,862 hectares.

In 2007, 15,485 employees worked in the nursery and sod industries. Sales at nursery and sod operations reached $758 million in 2007, up 5.6% from a year earlier, with nursery operations accounting for most of the gain.

Note: As a result of the release of data from the 2006 Census of Agriculture on May 16, 2007, estimates of area figures for greenhouse, nursery and sod operations contained in the *Greenhouse, Sod and Nursery Industries* series have been revised, where necessary, to align with those from the Census. Other variables were also adjusted accordingly, where appropriate. New data points for the 2001 to 2006 period are now available upon request.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0006.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3416.

The 2007 issue of *Greenhouse, Sod and Nursery Industries* (22-202-XIB, free) is now available from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Lorie Shinder (613-951-0524; *lorie.shinder@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Civil aviation operating statistics

January to December 2007

From January to December 2007, the major Canadian air carriers reported a 6.4% increase in passengers and a 5.7% advance in passenger-kilometres compared with the same period in 2006. WestJet reported that total passenger-kilometres flown surged 19.9% during the 12-month period, while the operations of Air Canada grew by 2.6%.

Both carriers also noted improvements in their passenger load factor (a measure of the fullness of their aircraft). From January to December 2007, Air Canada's passenger load factor reached 81.3% and WestJet's passenger load factor stood at 79.5%.

Available on CANSIM: table 401-0001.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5026.

January to December 2007 operational data on civil aviation for Air Canada and WestJet will appear in the *Aviation: Service Bulletin*, Vol. 40, no. 3 (51-004-XWE, free), which will soon be available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-866-500-8400; fax: 613-951-0009; *transportationstatistics@statcan.ca*), Transportation Division. ■

Crude oil and natural gas production

February 2008 (preliminary)

Provincial crude oil and marketable natural gas production data are now available for February.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2198.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the Marketing and Dissemination Section (613-951-9497; toll-free 1-866-873-8789; *energ@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins

February 2008

Data on industrial chemicals and synthetic resins are now available for February.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0014.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2183.

The February 2008 issue of *Industrial Chemicals and Synthetic Resins*, Vol. 51, no. 2 (46-002-XWE, free) is now available from the *Publications* module of our website.

For general information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the dissemination officer (613-951-9497; toll-free 1-866-873-8789; *manufact@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

New products

Greenhouse, Sod and Nursery Industries, 2007
Catalogue number 22-202-XIB
(free).

Industrial Chemicals and Synthetic Resins,
February 2008, Vol. 51, no. 2
Catalogue number 46-002-XWE
(free).

Energy Statistics Handbook, Fourth quarter 2007
Catalogue number 57-601-XCB ($54/$161).

Energy Statistics Handbook, Fourth quarter 2007
Catalogue number 57-601-XWE
(free).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

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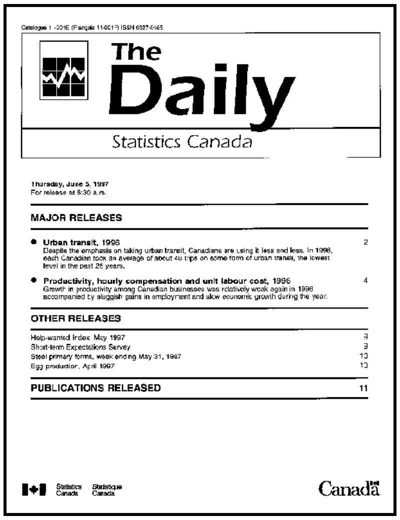

Catalogue 1 -001E (Français 11-001F) ISSN 0827-0465

The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** — 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 46 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** — 4
  Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index, May 1997	9
Short-term Expectations Survey	9
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Egg production, April 1997	10

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED — 11

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Release dates: April 21 to 25, 2008

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
21	**March intentions of principal field crop areas**	March 2008
21	**Canada's international transactions in securities**	February 2008
22	**Human Activity and the Environment**	
22	**Canadian Social Trends**	
23	**Retail trade**	February 2008
24	**Electronic commerce and technology**	2007