



# Infomat

*A Weekly Review*

Friday, September 19, 2003

## INSIDE

### ◆ SPOTLIGHT: May-December unions

This week's *Spotlight* is on May-December relationships. A study published in *Canadian social trends* finds that unions in which there is a large age difference between spouses are neither as common nor as glamorous as they are cracked up to be.

### ◆ Exports up for first time in four months

Canada's merchandise exports rose for the first time in four months in July, thanks to the economy in the United States. Canadian companies sent \$32.7 billion of goods abroad, up 0.5% from June, fuelled by growth in automotive and energy exports.

### ◆ Industrial capacity use lowest since late 2001

Industries cut back drastically on capacity use between April and June, as the impact of SARS, the mad cow scare and a stronger Canadian dollar took their toll on the economy. The industrial capacity utilization rate fell to 81.2% in the second quarter. This was the lowest level since the final three months of 2001.

### ◆ Well-off students more likely to pursue postsecondary education

Young people whose families earned more were more likely to pursue postsecondary education. About 83% of individuals in this age group whose estimated family earnings exceeded \$80,000 had taken at least some postsecondary education as of March 2002.

## Manufacturing shipments rebound after dismal quarter

Canada's factories rebounded in July after a dismal second quarter, as manufacturing shipments increased for only the third time this year. Factory output rose 1.7% to \$43.0 billion, led by motor vehicle manufacturing.

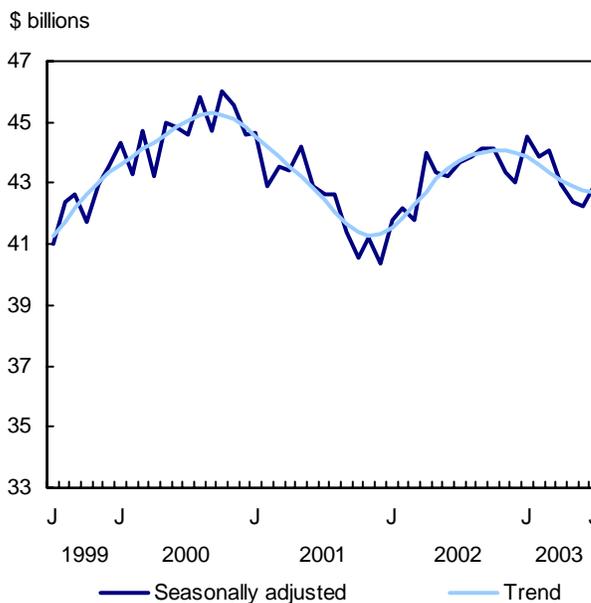
The breadth of July's recovery was encouraging. In total, 16 of 21 industries, representing three-quarters of total shipments, reported increases.

July's gain followed three straight monthly declines during which the value of shipments fell a total of 4.2%.

Manufacturers in the big-ticket durable goods industries were primarily responsible for the strong start to the summer. Shipments of durable goods rose 2.4% to \$24.5 billion in July, making up ground lost earlier in the year. Shipments of nondurable goods rose 0.7%, the first gain in four months.

*(continued on page 2)*

First increase in shipments in four months



### Manufacturing shipments... (continued from page 1)

At the same time, finished-product inventories declined 1.0%, while new orders continued to gain ground, rising for the second consecutive month. The only downside was the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive decline in unfilled orders which fell 1.2%, largely the result of a global downturn in the aviation sector.

South of the border, the American economy continued to show signs of recovery. US manufacturing shipments were up 2.5% in July, following a 1.5% increase in June.

In Canada, shipments of motor vehicles jumped 7.6% to \$5.7 billion in July, leading all industries. Shipments of computers fell 10.4% to \$1.4 billion, the fifth decline in the last six months. Food shipments declined 1.0% to \$5.2 billion, the third drop in a row and the lowest level since March 2002.

Six provinces reported higher shipments, led by Ontario where they rose 3.1% to \$23.1 billion. Motor vehicle manufacturing, coupled with increases in the machinery and petroleum industries, fuelled the gain.

Key export markets for beef products remained closed for a second straight month in the wake of the mad cow scare. During the first seven months of 2003, shipments of slaughtered animals

in Alberta, the hardest hit province, were 11.1% below the level for the same period last year.

Manufacturers pared 0.3% from inventories to \$62.7 billion in July, following declines in the two previous months. Inventories have been on a rollercoaster ride since their peak of \$65.8 billion in November 2000, the height of the high-tech boom.

A sizable boost in shipments coupled with a continuing decline in inventory levels contributed to an improved inventory-to-shipment ratio. The ratio fell back to 1.46 in July from June's 1.49, the lowest level in four months.

The ratio is a measure of the time that would be required in order to exhaust finished-product inventories if shipments were to remain at their current level.

Manufacturers reported new orders of \$42.5 billion, up 2.1% from June, which followed a 2.0% gain the month before. It was the highest total since March, thanks to increases in the machinery and motor vehicles industries.

*For more information, contact Russell Kowaluk (613-951-0600; kowarus@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division.*

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## Lethargic pace in labour productivity continues

The lethargic pace of growth in labour productivity in Canada's business sector continued during the second quarter of 2003. Productivity edged up only 0.1%, its first quarterly gain in a year.

On the other hand, American businesses increased their productivity 1.8% compared with the first quarter, substantially faster than Canada's gain.

Labour productivity, measured as output for every hour worked, is an indicator of a nation's standard of living.

Economic output in the business sector declined 0.5% during the second quarter of 2003 as the impact of SARS, mad cow disease and the stronger Canadian dollar hit the economy. At the same time, the number of hours worked in the business sector fell 0.6%. Both declines halted a string of six straight quarterly gains.

On a year-over-year basis, labour productivity declined 0.6% in Canada in the second quarter compared with the same quarter last year. In contrast, in the United States, productivity rose 4.3%.

*For more information, contact Jean-Pierre Maynard (613-951-3654), Micro-Economic Analysis Division.*

# SPOTLIGHT: Relationships

## Study challenges myths of May-December unions

The images leap out of supermarket tabloids and glossy magazines – older men in a relationship with a much younger female partner.

Just how common are they in Canada, and who are the people in these May-December relationships? A study published in *Canadian social trends* finds that they are neither as common nor as glamorous as they are cracked up to be.

Using data from the 2001 Census, the study found that only 42% of the estimated 3.5 million couples in Canada had an age gap of more than three years. In only 9% of cases were they seven to nine years apart, and in only 7% of cases were they 10 years or more apart.

In the vast majority of couples, the man was older than the woman. There were a handful of relationships in which women were older than men, but their numbers were substantially lower. Women were at least 10 years older than their partners in only 1% of cases.

Couples with very large age differences were rare. Among couples with at least a 10-year gap, where the man was 65 or older, only 1% included a female partner who was 35 or younger.

The study was written by Monica Boyd, who is Canada Research Chair at the University of Toronto's department of sociology, and a visiting research scholar at Statistics Canada.

Contrary to the image portrayed of Hollywood couples, Ms Boyd found that most couples in age-discrepant relationships have lower combined incomes than those who are similar in age. In addition, they are more likely to have at least one partner with less than a Grade 11 education.

Couples in which one partner was more than 10 years older than the other did less well economically. Those in which men were at least 10 years older had combined incomes that were about 91% of the overall average for all couples.

### *Canadian social trends*

*Canadian social trends* is Statistics Canada's quarterly magazine that integrates data from many sources to examine emerging social trends and issues. It also features the latest social indicators, as well as information about Statistics Canada's products and services.

In addition to two articles shedding light on common-law relationships, the autumn issue looked at issues such as stress at work, unpaid informal caregiving, and the earnings of immigrants in the 1990s. *Canadian social trends* (11-008-XIE/XPE) is available on Statistics Canada's website ([www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)).

But unions in which women were substantially older than their partners fared the least well. Their average combined incomes were only 83% of the overall average.

Age-discrepant couples were also more likely to be below Statistics Canada's low-income cutoffs.

As the age gap between partners grows, so does the likelihood of living common-law. And age-discrepant couples in which women were older were much more likely to live in common-law unions than those in which men were older.

Relationships in which men were substantially older were also more likely than other unions to include partners who were both foreign-born.

One of the highest rates of May-December relationships was among male same-sex couples. More than one-quarter (26%) of men in same-sex couples were more than 10 years apart, compared with 18% of female same-sex unions and 8% of male-female unions.

You can read the article "May-December: Canadians in age-discrepant relationships" in the autumn 2003 edition of *Canadian social trends*, available on Statistics Canada's website ([www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)).

For more information, contact Warren Clark (613-951-2560), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.

## Men far more willing to live in common-law relationships

Men are far more willing than women to live in a common-law relationship, according to a new study published in *Canadian social trends*.

Using data from the 2001 General Social Survey, it found that 62% of unmarried men said they could agree to such a relationship, almost twice the proportion of 36% of women.

Education and family experience were also factors influencing attitudes. Children of divorced or separated parents were more open to common-law unions than those whose parents remained together. Individuals with at least some postsecondary education were more open to the idea than those with less than high school.

The census found that between 1981 and 2001, the proportion of common-law couples doubled from 6% of all families to 14%. Nowhere was that trend stronger than in Quebec. Across Canada, 48% of never married or previously married people said they could consider a common-law relationship in the future. In Quebec, this rate soared to 61%.

For more information, contact Warren Clark (613-951-2560), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.

## Exports up for first time in four months

Canada's merchandise exports rose for the first time in four months in July, thanks to an improving economy in the United States. Canadian companies sent \$32.7 billion of goods abroad, up 0.5% from June, fuelled by growth in automotive and energy exports. At the same time, they brought in \$28.3 billion of goods, a 1.2% increase.

With the gap between exports and imports narrowing, Canada's merchandise trade balance fell from almost \$4.6 billion in June to just over \$4.4 billion.

(A larger-than-usual adjustment was made to previously published data on merchandise trade related to the rapid appreciation of the Canadian dollar in the second quarter. Export values were revised up by \$1 billion for the first quarter of 2003, and \$2.6 billion for the second quarter. In addition, the trade surplus for June was revised upward by \$1 billion.)

Strong advances in automotive and energy exports were partly offset by declines in the machinery and equipment sector, and the industrial goods and materials sector.

On the import side, modest increases in Canada's largest four sectors (machinery and equipment, automotive products, consumer goods and industrial goods and materials) outpaced small declines in energy and agricultural products.

The trade surplus with the United States expanded from \$7.9 billion to almost \$8.2 billion, as exports grew faster than imports. Companies sent \$28.0 billion in goods south of the border, up 2.7% from June, and imported \$19.9 billion in goods, a 2.4% increase.

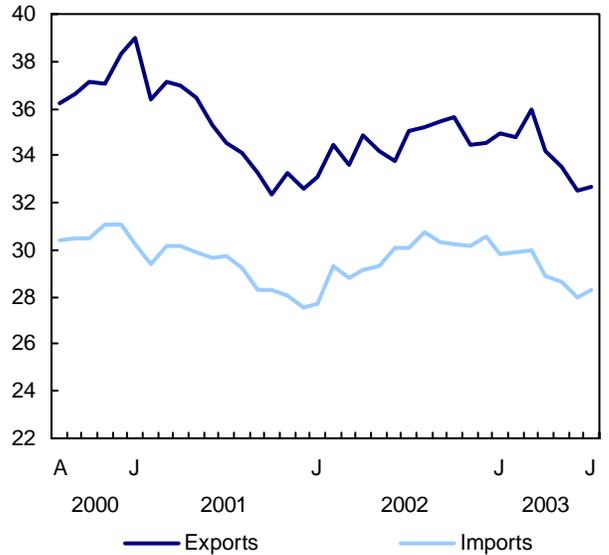
Overall, exports declined in three major areas: industrial goods and materials, machinery and equipment and consumer goods.

Seasonally adjusted exports in the automotive sector rose 3.5% to more than \$7.4 billion. Increases were widespread for all automotive sectors, with a 3.4% increase in passenger autos and chassis exports leading the way.

Foreigners bought 17.9% more crude petroleum than in June, as they sought to replenish stocks, keeping prices strong. High summer demand for gasoline brought on a 9.4% gain in petroleum and coal products. Offsetting these increases, electricity exports fell 10.6% to only \$117 million.

### Exports and imports

\$ billions, seasonally adjusted



Exports of forestry products climbed 4.3% to \$2.8 billion, halting a six-month slide. The main factors behind the gain were a rebound in wood pulp and other wood products (largely volume-related), and an increase in newsprint and other paper and paperboard.

Exports of agricultural and fishing products grew 4.2%, despite virtually non-existent Canadian beef exports, as foreign borders remained closed following the mad cow disease scare.

On the down side, exports of machinery and equipment fell 2.2% to just under \$7.1 billion. Exports of industrial goods and materials fell 1.3% in July to \$5.2 billion. Exports in this sector have shown a downward trend since the beginning of 2003.

Imports rose in the top four sectors, halting three months of decline in Canada's overall import trade.

For more information, contact Matthew MacDonald (613-951-8551), International Trade Division.

## Industrial capacity use lowest since late 2001

Industries cut back drastically on capacity use between April and June, as the impact of SARS, the mad cow scare and a stronger Canadian dollar took their toll on the economy. The second-quarter decline in industrial capacity use left the rate at its lowest level since the final quarter of 2001, when world economies were still reeling from the impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

The industrial capacity utilization rate fell from 82.5% in the first quarter to 81.2% in the second quarter. This was the lowest level since the final three months of 2001, when the rate reached 80.4%.

The percentage decline was also the largest since the third quarter of 2001, when the rate fell 1.9 percentage points.

(Capacity utilization rates have been revised back to the first quarter of 2001 to include revisions in the source data.)

Despite some indications of a modest recovery in the American economy in June, international demand remained soft in the second quarter and contributed to a decline in production in the manufacturing sector.

The rising Canadian dollar and the imposition of tariffs slowed down sawmill operations, which had difficulties selling in American markets. An increase in domestic demand for consumer goods and housing offset these factors to a degree.

The only industrial sector to record an increase in capacity utilization during the second quarter was construction, which benefited from the gains in residential and non-residential building investment. Its rate rose from 84.5% to 85.1%.

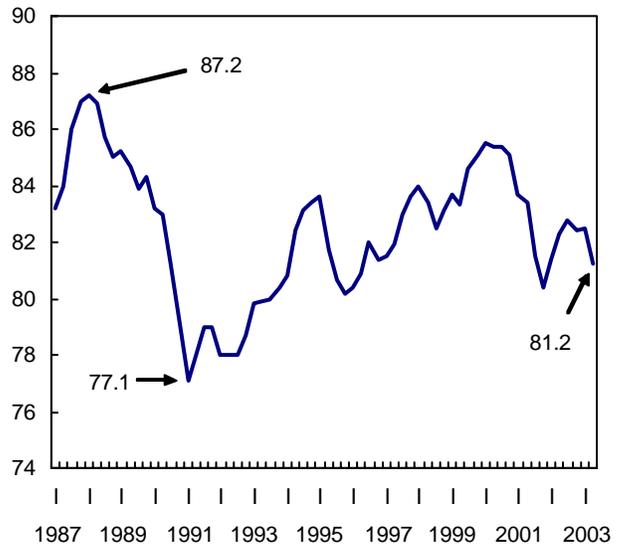
Declines in capacity use were fairly widespread in the manufacturing sector, where rates fell in 15 of 21 manufacturing groups.

Manufacturers used less of their production capacity for a third straight quarter. The sector's rate in the second quarter was 82.5%, down from 83.7% in the first. Weak international demand was one of the key factors underlying a 1.4% decrease in production in manufacturing.

Among the components of manufacturing, the strongest contributors to the decline in capacity use were transportation

### Big drop in capacity use

% (rate of capacity use)



equipment, wood products, primary metals, rubber and plastic products and machine industries.

Capacity use for transportation equipment manufacturers fell from 87.7% to 86.0%. Cutbacks in the production of automotive parts, due to a decline in the production of automotive vehicles in the United States, as well as aerospace parts and products were behind a 1.8% drop in production in this industry.

After five consecutive quarterly increases, wood product manufacturers reduced their capacity utilization from 99.8% in the first quarter to 96.0% in the second. Because of the strength of the Canadian dollar and deterrent tariffs, sawmills had difficulty selling on the American market.

In the forestry and logging sector, production fell 7.6%. As a result, companies reduced capacity use from 83.8% to 77.6%.

*For more information, contact Mychèle Gagnon (613-951-0994) or Richard Landry (613-951-2579), Investment and Capital Stock Division.*

## Well-off students more likely to pursue postsecondary education

Young people whose families earned more were more likely to pursue postsecondary education, according to a statistical snapshot of young Canadians aged 18 to 24 in 2002. First-ever data from the Postsecondary Education Participation Survey showed that about 83% of individuals in this age group whose estimated family earnings exceeded \$80,000 had taken at least some postsecondary education as of March 2002.

As estimated family earnings decreased, the proportion of youth who had taken postsecondary education declined.

Two-thirds (67%) of youth with family earnings between \$55,000 and \$80,000 had taken some postsecondary education. This dropped to just over one-half (55%) when family earnings were estimated at less than \$55,000.

More than 5,000 young people in all provinces were surveyed.

The survey found that median spending for full-time university students (the point at which half of students spent more and half spent less) amounted to \$11,200. In contrast, the median for college students was \$9,330, while the median for CEGEP students was \$4,550.

Students who responded to the survey were asked about everything on which they had spent money for the current academic year. This included tuition, fees, books and supplies, as well as non-educational expenses such as computers, insurance, rent, meals, utilities, clothing and so on.

Even so, a relatively large number of college and CEGEP students spent more overall than many university students. For example, 46% of college students and 15% of CEGEP students spent more than \$10,000.

The survey showed that as of March 2002, an estimated 1,622,000 young people, or 62% of all those aged 18 to 24, had taken some form of postsecondary program after leaving high school.

Of these young people, 44%, or about 712,000, had applied for a government student loan at some point in their postsecondary school life. Some 564,000, or four out of five of those who applied, actually received one.

Government student loans supplied funding to about 26% of full-time students during the 2000/01 academic year. About 16% borrowed from parents, a spouse or other family member, while 14% borrowed privately from a bank or used a bank line of credit.

Just over three-quarters (77%) of full-time students used savings from jobs they had before starting the academic year. Some 64% used earnings gained while they went to school.

About 80% of youth who had their own savings enrolled in higher education, compared with 70% of those who only had savings put aside by others.

The vast majority (86%) of the young people who entered postsecondary programs did so before they turned 20. Almost two-thirds (64%) began their postsecondary studies within 12 months of finishing high school, and over one-half started within three months.

About 255,000 young Canadians began their first experience with postsecondary education in September 2000. By March 2002, three-quarters (77%) of them were still in school, and 16% had quit. The remainder, about 7%, had graduated from short-term programs and were no longer in school.

*For more information, contact Client Services, (1-800-307-3382, or 613-951-7608, educationstats@statcan.ca), Centre for Education Statistics.*

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## Americans putting in more hours at work than Canadians

Americans aged 16 to 69 increasingly worked more hours than Canadians throughout the 1990s. This gap in hours was likely related to the sluggish economic growth in Canada relative to the United States during much of the 1990s.

The number of hours increased in both countries in the 1980s. However, differences in working hours were still small in 1989, as Canadians worked 1,354 hours compared with 1,380 for Americans.

By 2000, Americans were working 1,455 hours on average during the year, much more than the 1,332 hours supplied by Canadians.

Both countries experienced comparable growth in average working hours per (working age) person from 1979 to 1989. During this period, average annual hours per person rose 7.9% in the United States and 7.5% in Canada.

Hours increased primarily because of a rise in hours supplied by women. American women worked 20.1% more hours in 1989 than in 1979. Canadian women increased their hours by 25.5% during the same period.

Another factor accounting for rising hours in both countries is the relative increase of prime-aged (25 to 54 years old) individuals among the working age population. This is because prime-aged individuals tend to supply more hours than younger and older individuals do.

*For more information, contact Andrew Heisz (613-951-3748) or Sébastien LaRochelle-Côté (613-951-0803), Business and Labour Market Analysis Division.*

## Strong demand for new trucks boosts motor vehicle sales

Strong demand for new trucks in July pushed up sales of all new motor vehicles, which climbed 12.6% from June, when they had decreased 10.4%. Dealers sold a total of 145,496 new cars in July, 16,309 more units than in June.

In July, new truck (minivans, sport-utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans and buses) sales grew almost three times more quickly than passenger car sales. Nonetheless, the strong increase in number of new motor vehicles sold in July was not sufficient to boost year-to-date sales for the first seven months of 2003. These sales remained 4.0% lower than sales for the same period of 2002.

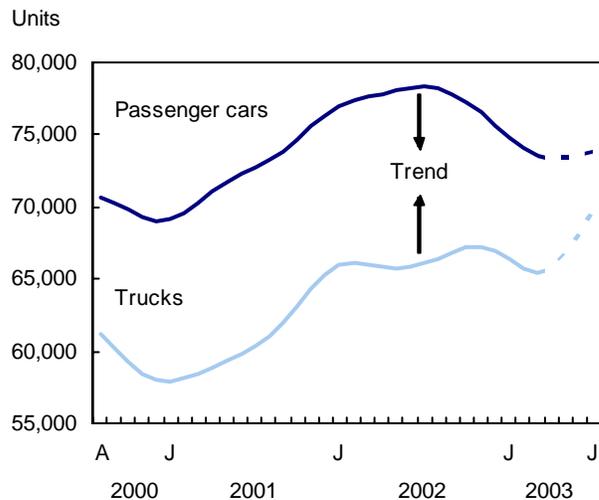
New motor vehicle sales have recently gone through major fluctuations that make it difficult to interpret sales trends for either passenger cars or trucks. New motor vehicle sales remained at a high level throughout 2002, following a period of sustained growth that prevailed during most of 2001.

The number of trucks sold in July rose 19.5% from June, when sales were down 12.4%. In July, 71,217 new trucks were sold, the highest monthly figure since December 1997. With the July increase, trucks took a 48.9% share of the market for all new motor vehicle sales, compared with an average of 46.1% in 2002 and 45.6% in 2001.

The incentives offered by automakers, notably 0% financing and cash-backs, appear to have induced consumers to buy more trucks. Considering the high average price of the latter, the incentives offered might have brought more of these vehicles into consumers' price range. Also, the most generous incentives were offered by the Big Three automakers, who hold the majority of the market for trucks.

New truck sales underwent a turnaround, returning to an upward movement, following a period of decline that started in early 2003. Previously, sales had maintained a slight upward movement since the summer of 2002. For the first half of 2002, truck sales had generally remained stable.

### The gap between trucks and passenger cars continues to shrink



The last few trend estimates are subject to revision. This is indicated by the dashed line.

In July, dealers reported selling 74,279 new passenger cars, a 6.8% increase from June, when sales were down 8.5%. The increase in sales of all new passenger cars was entirely attributable to North American-built cars. Sales of the latter rose 10.1%, while sales of overseas-built cars dropped 0.7%, the sixth monthly decline in a row.

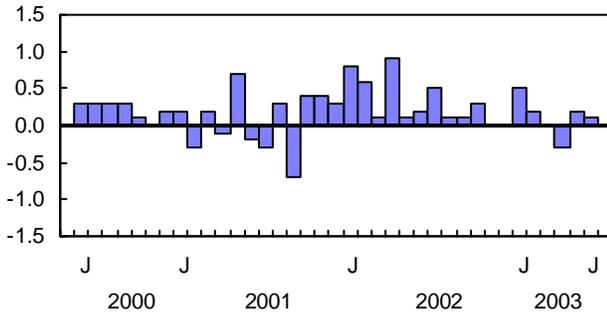
The number of new motor vehicles sold in July was up from June in all provinces. In June, sales had declined in every province except Newfoundland and Labrador, where sales had increased.

For more information contact Client Services (1-877 421-3067 613-951-3549; [retailinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:retailinfo@statcan.ca)), Distributive Trades Division.

## Current trends

### Gross domestic product

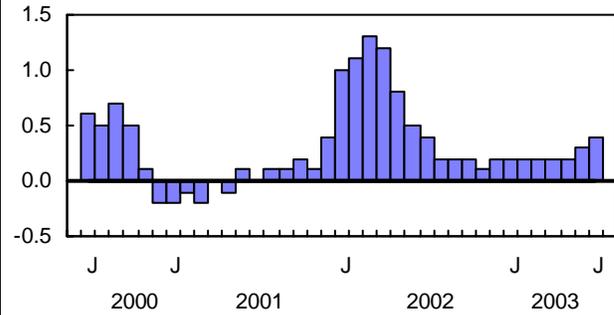
% change, previous month



Total economic activity edged up 0.1% in June, after a 0.2% gain in May.

### Composite Index

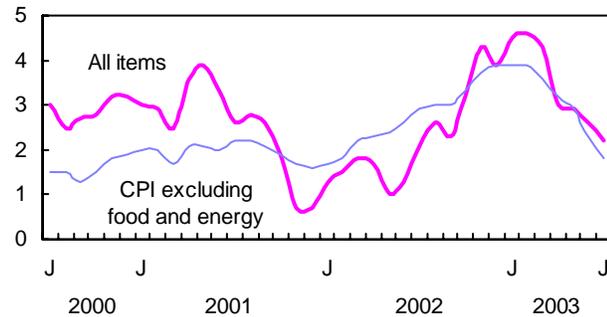
% change, previous month



The leading indicator grew 0.4% in July after rising 0.3% in June.

### Consumer Price Index

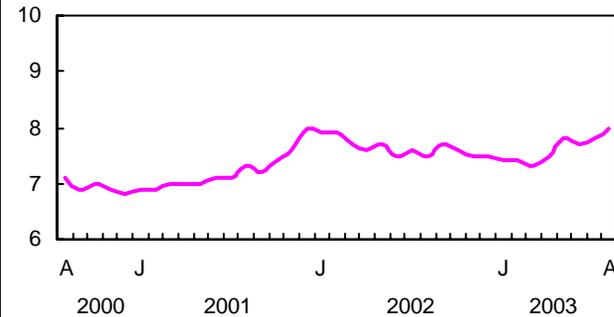
% change, previous year



Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.2% higher in July than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 1.8%.

### Unemployment rate

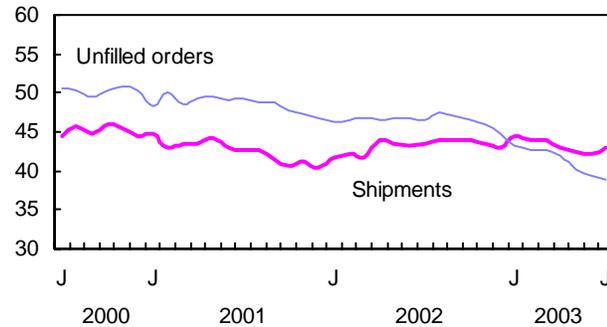
%



In August, the unemployment rate rose 0.2 percentage points to 8.0%.

### Manufacturing

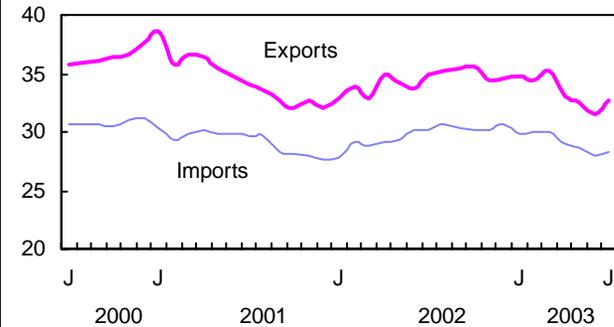
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments increased 1.7% in July to \$43.0 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders declined 0.4% to \$39.0 billion.

### Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In July, the value of merchandise increased 1.1% to \$32.7 billion. Imports fell 0.3% to \$28.3 billion.

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted except the Consumer Price Index.

## Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
<b>GENERAL</b>				
Gross domestic product (\$ billions, 1997) <sup>1</sup>	July	995.0	0.1%	1.9%
Composite Index (1992=100)	July	182.5	0.4%	2.4%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billions)	Q2 2003	40.4	-1.3%	11.7%
Capacity utilization rate (%) <sup>2</sup>	Q1 2003	82.8	0.3†	1.2†
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail trade (\$ billions)	June	26.4	0.3%	2.7%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	July*	145.5	12.6%	3.7%
Wholesale trade (\$ billions)	June	35.8	0.0%	3.3%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
Employment (millions)	August	15.7	-0.1%	1.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	August	8.0	0.2†	0.5†
Participation rate (%)	August	67.5	0.0†	0.5†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	June	693.29	0.9%	2.1%
Regular Employment Insurance beneficiaries (in thousands)	May	561.4	2.7%	0.3%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise exports (\$ billions)	July*	32.7	0.5%	-6.7%
Merchandise imports (\$ billions)	July*	28.3	1.2%	-5.9%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billions)	July*	4.4	-0.2	-0.6
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
Shipments (\$ billions)	July*	43.0	1.7%	0.8%
New orders (\$ billions)	July*	42.5	2.1%	-0.8%
Unfilled orders (\$ billions)	July*	39.1	-1.5%	-16.6%
Inventory/shipments ratio	July*	1.46	-0.03	1.42
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	July	122.2	0.1%	2.2%
Industrial Product Price Index (1997=100)	July	105.3	1.3%	-1.6%
Raw Materials Price Index (1997=100)	July	110.0	-1.5%	-2.4%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	July	116.7	0.3%	4.7%

*Note:* All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.

\* new this week

† percentage point

<sup>1</sup> 1997 replaces 1992 as the base year used in determining prices for gross domestic product by industry. Also, valuation has been changed from factor cost to basic prices.

<sup>2</sup> Calculation of the rates of capacity use is now based on the 1997 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which has replaced the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

# Infomat

## A weekly review

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## Products released from September 11 to 18, 2003

SUBJECT AREA Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price (\$) (issue/subscription)
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>			
Farm environmental management in Canada, Manure storage in Canada	2003	21-021-MIE	Free
Production of eggs	July 2003	23-003-XIB	Free
<b>ANALYTICAL STUDIES</b>			
Economic analysis research paper series:			
The sources of growth of the Canadian business sector's CO2 emissions	1990-1996	11F0027MIE2003015	Free
Working hours in Canada and the United States	No. 209	11F0019MIE2003209	Free
<b>BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND FINANCIAL FLOWS</b>			
Canada's balance of international payments	Q1 2003	67-001-XPB	38/124
Canada's international investment position	Q2 2003	67-202-XIE	23/51
<b>DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES</b>			
New motor vehicle sales	July 2003	63-007-XIB	13/124
<b>HOUSING, FAMILY AND SOCIAL STATISTICS</b>			
Education, employment and income of adults with and without disabilities – Tables	2001	89-587-XIE	Free
<b>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS</b>			
Latest developments in the Canadian economic accounts		13-605-XIE	Free
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>			
Canadian international merchandise trade	June 2003	65-001-XIB	14/141
Exports by commodity	June 2003	65-004-XMB	37/361
Exports by commodity	June 2003	65-004-XPB	78/773
Exports by country	January-June 2003	65-003-XMB	62/206
Exports by country	January-June 2003	65-003-XPB	124/412
<b>LABOUR AND HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS ANALYSIS</b>			
Perspectives on labour and income	Autumn 2003	75-001-XPE	18/58
<b>MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY</b>			
Footwear statistics	January-June 2003	33-002-XIB	6/11
<b>PRICES</b>			
Industry price indexes	July 2003	62-011-XIE	17/163
Industry price indexes	July 2003	62-011-XPE	22/217
<b>SERVICE INDUSTRIES</b>			
Restaurant, caterer and tavern statistics	May 2003	63-011-XIE	6/55

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