



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, September 24, 1999

OVERVIEW

◆ Energy prices drive inflation rate higher

In August, the annual inflation rate in consumer prices rose to 2.1%. The acceleration from July's rate of 1.8% reflects the effect of rapidly rising gasoline prices and higher costs for fuel oil and natural gas.

◆ Business profits up for third consecutive quarter

In the second quarter, the operating profits of Canadian businesses increased 1.6% to \$37.2 billion. It was the third consecutive quarterly increase. Profits have recovered 19.8% over the past three quarters.

◆ Shipments decline due to plant shutdowns

In July, manufacturers' shipments edged down 0.1%. Mainly, the decline was due to longer-than-normal annual shutdowns in the auto industry. Excluding the auto industry, shipments increased 0.8%.

◆ New vehicle sales on the rise since last fall

In July, strong truck and car sales led new motor vehicle sales higher by 4.0%. Sales of new vehicles have been on the rise since last fall and reached their second highest level ever in July.

◆ Slight decline in rate of unionization

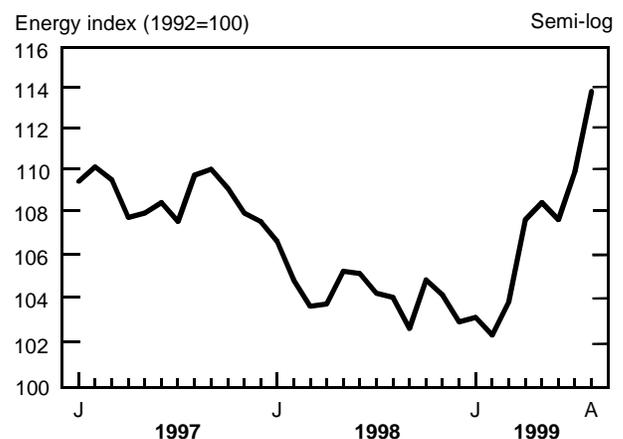
Between the first halves of 1998 and 1999, the rate of unionization across the country declined marginally from 30.7% of all paid employees to 30.1%. This decline occurred because of an increase in the number of paid workers.

Energy prices drive inflation rate higher

In August, the annual inflation rate on the basket of goods and services measured by the Consumer Price Index rose to 2.1%. That followed annual rates of 1.6% in June and 1.8% in July. The acceleration reflects the effect of rapidly rising gasoline prices and higher rates for natural gas. Excluding energy, consumer price inflation has ranged from 1.6% for June and July to 1.5% for August.

Higher energy prices explained nearly one-third of August's rise in consumer prices compared with August 1998. Another important factor was increased prices for motor vehicles. Once again, downward price pressure originated with computer equipment/supplies and telephone services. Compared with August 1998, energy prices rose 9.4%—the highest annual increase since the upward trend started in February 1999. (February marked the end of a period of falling energy prices that began in November 1997.) August's 9.4% annual rise in energy prices reflects a strong advance in gasoline prices, a rise in rates for natural gas and an annual increase in fuel oil prices—the first since October 1997. According to the Raw Materials Price Index, crude oil prices jumped 45.3% between July 1998 and July 1999.

Energy prices within the CPI



(continued on page 2)



... Energy prices drive inflation rate higher

On a monthly basis, the basket of consumer goods and services cost 0.3% more in August than it did in July. The monthly inflation rate was also 0.3% in July. Again, higher energy prices were the key factor. From July to August, the cost of energy

Consumer Price Index, August 1999
% change from previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All-items	Food	Shelter	Transportation	Energy
Canada	2.1	1.1	1.3	5.2	9.4
Newfoundland	1.7	1.2	1.8	2.5	4.2
Prince Edward Island	1.6	0.4	2.6	2.3	5.0
Nova Scotia	2.3	1.1	2.2	4.9	7.6
New Brunswick	2.3	1.7	1.6	6.6	10.6
Quebec	1.8	0.5	1.1	5.9	9.7
Ontario	2.5	1.9	1.5	5.2	9.5
Manitoba	2.1	1.6	1.2	4.5	4.6
Saskatchewan	2.0	-0.1	2.3	4.8	8.8
Alberta	2.6	1.1	3.1	5.6	12.2
British Columbia	1.3	0.4	-0.5	4.5	9.8
Whitehorse	1.3	1.8	-1.1	3.9	-1.9
Yellowknife	1.3	0.4	-0.1	3.4	1.7

increased 3.5%. That came on the heels of a 2.1% rise in July and a slight 0.7% decline in June. In August, the price of gasoline jumped 6.3%, while the rate for fuel oil rose 5.3%. And, after rising a slight 0.3% from June to July, the cost of natural gas surged in August by 1.9%. Those price increases are attributed to a short supply of natural gas in Western Canada, as well as to the prospect of a growing demand for natural gas in the United States over the coming winter.

In August, consumers also faced higher prices than they did in July for clothing and footwear (+1.7%). But that is common at this time of year. Consumers benefited from lower seasonal prices for food purchased from stores, which dropped 1.3% from July. Chiefly, this decline was due to the seasonal decrease in fresh vegetable (-12.9%) and fresh fruit (-2.8%) prices, thanks to good weather conditions and a larger supply of local crops in August.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9940-9956.

The September 1999 issue of *The Consumer Price Index* (62-001-XPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-9606, fax: 613-951-1539, infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division. See also "Current trends" on page 7.

Business profits up for third consecutive quarter

In the second quarter, the operating profits of Canadian businesses increased 1.6% to \$37.2 billion. It was the third consecutive quarterly increase after a downturn throughout most of 1998. Profits have recovered 19.8% over the past three quarters. The second quarter's gain was entirely concentrated in the non-financial enterprises, where strong retail, construction and mineral fuels sectors boosted profits 3.7%. In the financial enterprises, meanwhile, profits slipped from the first quarter by 3.9%. Insurers suffered the largest decline.

The retail sector's profits totalled \$2.0 billion, a jump of 17.8%. While most retail businesses reported higher profits in the second quarter, general merchandise stores and food and beverage retailers led the way. Businesses in the construction sector took advantage of a strong housing market to boost sales and profits in the second quarter. Housing investment surged in the quarter by 3.6%. As well, the overall value of building permits issued in the quarter advanced 4.4%, as permits to build residential dwellings climbed 7.6%. Surging crude oil prices lifted the operating profits of businesses in the mineral fuels industry by 32.1%.

The substantial profit decline for insurance enterprises (-16.9% to \$0.8 billion), was largely due to higher insurance claims incurred in the quarter. Another source of weakness in the second quarter

Note to readers

Beginning with the data for the first quarter of 1999, significant changes were made to the *Quarterly Survey of Financial Statistics for Enterprises*. These changes, which affect the comparability and continuity of these financial statistics, were not completed in time for application to the second quarter. As a result, the first and second quarter data are preliminary and should be interpreted with caution.

was the manufacturing sector, where operating profits were unchanged. Makers of motor vehicles and parts posted profit gains, but these were offset by declines in several other manufacturing industries.

On the financial side, enterprises classified as "other financial intermediaries" were also a source of weakness. Lower profit gains from selling securities and other assets pulled their second-quarter profits down 12.1% to \$1.1 billion.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 8330-8383.

For financial industry data, contact Robert Moreau (613-951-2512). For more information on non-financial industry data, contact Bill Potter (613-951-2662). For further analytical information, contact Jean-Pierre Simard (613-951-0741), Industrial Organization and Finance Division.

Shipments decline due to plant shutdowns

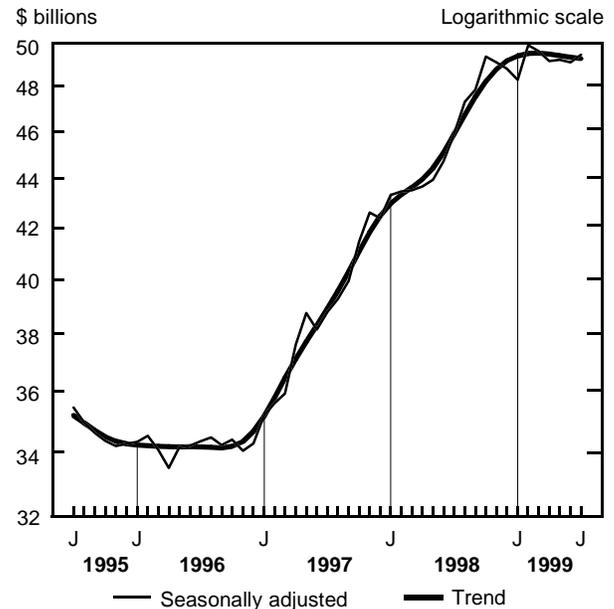
In July, manufacturers' shipments edged down 0.1% to \$40.3 billion. Mainly, the slight decline was due to longer-than-normal annual plant shutdowns in the auto industry. Excluding the auto industry (-3.1%), shipments increased 0.8%. The fluctuations observed since the beginning of the year have diminished and the trend for shipments has leveled off. Unfilled orders and inventories both increased in July.

Despite the overall decrease in shipments in July, there were gains in 15 of 22 industry groups, accounting for 55.8% of all shipments. The largest declines occurred in the motor vehicle (-2.4%), motor vehicle parts and accessories (-4.9%) and machinery (-4.7%) industries. The performance of the motor vehicle parts and accessories industry was due to the plant shutdowns and to the marked increase seen in June. As for the machinery industry, shipments were down due to the significant increase in June and due to sporadic work stoppages, either for vacations or for maintenance.

Offsetting increases in shipments occurred in the paper and allied products (+4.9%) and wood (+4.5%) industries. For paper and allied products, maintenance shutdowns in June and a 0.6% price increase in July explained most of the recovery. In the wood industry, the increase in shipments was mainly due to an increase in prices (+4.1%).

Unfilled orders climbed 0.7% to \$49.5 billion. Most of the gain was attributable to the aircraft and parts (+3.0%) and

Manufacturers' unfilled orders



machinery (+2.7%) industries. An offsetting decrease was observed in the fabricated metal products industry (-2.6%).

Manufacturers' inventory levels continued to rise (+1.0% to \$51.1 billion), mainly due to an increase in the raw materials sub-component (+2.0%). July represented the sixth consecutive month of increase in inventories since decreases occurred in December and January. The decrease in shipments and the increase in inventories lifted the inventory-to-shipments ratio up from 1.25 in June to 1.27. The largest contributors to July's increase in inventories, in order of importance, were the electric and electronic products (+7.5%), refined petroleum and coal products (+8.8%) and motor vehicle (+7.2%) industries. The increase in the refined petroleum and coal products group was largely due to a 7.3% increase in prices. Dominating the declines in inventory levels was the aircraft and parts industry (-4.4%).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9550-9555, 9558, 9559, 9562-9565, 9568-9579 and 9581-9595.

The July 1999 issue of *Monthly Survey of Manufacturing* (31-001-XPB, \$20/\$196) presents the full report. Detailed data on shipments by province are available on request. For further information, contact Craig Kuntz (613-951-7092, kuncrai@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. See also "Current trends" on page 7.

Manufacturers' shipments, July 1999 Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	40,325	-0.1
Newfoundland	171	-4.0
Prince Edward Island	82	-1.2
Nova Scotia	597	0.5
New Brunswick	735	5.1
Quebec	9,150	-0.7
Ontario	22,319	0.1
Manitoba	831	-4.8
Saskatchewan	516	5.4
Alberta	2,847	-1.3
British Columbia	3,075	1.6
Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut	3	-9.9

New vehicle sales on the rise since last fall

In July, strong truck and car sales led new motor vehicle sales higher by 4.0%. The number of new vehicles sold in the month totalled 130,542—the second highest monthly sales ever recorded. (The record occurred in December 1997, which was an exceptional month.) July's increase followed a 1.9% increase in June. Sales of new vehicles have been on the rise since last fall.

Truck sales rose for a second consecutive month in July (+5.0% to 64,007 vehicles). After generally declining throughout the second half of 1998, truck sales have been rising since the start of 1999. Meanwhile, the number of cars sold advanced for a second consecutive month (+3.2% to 66,534 vehicles). Car sales have generally been moving up since last fall.

The market share for North American-built cars has been on the decline since the start of 1997, falling from 89.5% in January 1997 to 75.0% this July (data not adjusted for seasonal factors). Several factors explain the decline. The depreciation of currencies in Asia due to the economic problems there may have stimulated sales of imported cars here. However, the firming-up of some of those currencies since mid-1998 may have made purchasing vehicles from Asia less attractive. In turn, this may have slowed the loss of market share for North American-built cars. At the same time, it may have pushed up the market share of North American-built trucks. The market share captured by North American-built trucks has remained relatively stable, slipping from 93.6% in January 1997 to 91.2% in July 1999.

Unadjusted for seasonal factors, new vehicle sales advanced from July 1998 to July 1999 by 7.9%. At the provincial level, dealers in Ontario posted the largest yearly gain in total number sold (+13.9%), as well as in number of cars (+12.3%) and trucks (+16.0%) sold. Vehicle dealers in New Brunswick, Manitoba and Newfoundland all registered gains greater than 10.0%. Increases were also posted in Nova Scotia (+6.2%), Quebec (+4.7%), British Columbia (+4.3%), Saskatchewan (+3.4%) and Prince Edward Island (+1.4%). Only in Alberta did dealers record a decline in the number of vehicles sold compared with July 1998 (-3.8%).

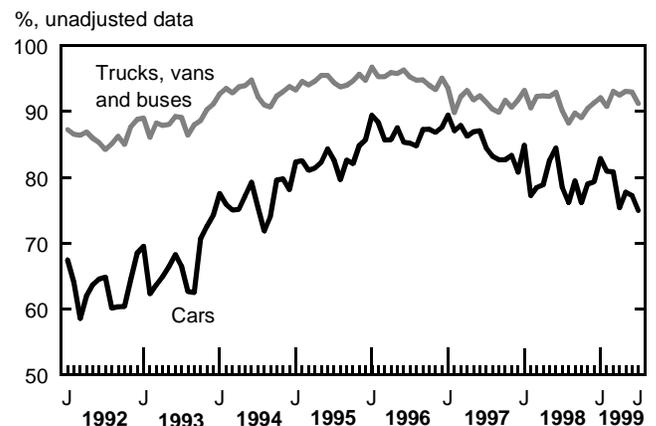
Note to readers

Cars include those used for personal and commercial purposes (such as taxis or rental cars). Trucks include minivans, sport-utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans, coaches and buses.

New vehicles built in North America include those made or assembled in Canada, the United States or Mexico. All other new vehicles are considered imports (manufactured overseas).

For reasons of confidentiality, data for the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are included with the British Columbia data. Unless otherwise noted, all data are seasonally adjusted.

Market shares for cars and trucks built in North America



Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

The July 1999 issue of New motor vehicle sales (63-007-XIB, \$13/\$124) can be downloaded from the Internet at www.statcan.ca. To order data, or for general information, contact Client Services (613-951-3549; 1 877 421-3067; retailinfo@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division. For analytical information, contact Cl rance Kimanyi (613-951-3592, kimacle@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Slight decline in rate of unionization

About 3.6 million paid workers belonged to a union in the first half of 1999. That number is unchanged from the first half of 1998. Over that period, the rate of unionization across the country declined marginally from 30.7% of all paid employees to 30.1%. This occurred because of an increase in the number of paid workers: average paid employment rose by about 292,000 to 11.9 million. Unionization rates were down for both men (from 31.6% to 30.9%) and women (from 29.8% to 29.3%).

Almost all the decline in unionization rates occurred in the private sector, where the rate fell from 19.1% to 18.2%. The rate of unionization among employees in the public sector remained virtually unchanged at 71.3%, more than three times the 19.1% rate found in the private sector. In the public sector, the unionization of women (72.5%) was slightly higher than that of men (69.7%), reflecting the presence of women in public administration and in teaching and health care positions.

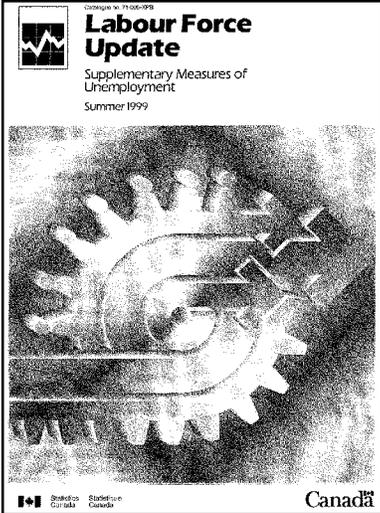
The decline in unionization rates between the first halves of 1998 and 1999 was particularly evident in the manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and accommodation and food industries. The biggest increase occurred at utilities.

Unionization rates declined in five provinces: Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick. The rate remained unchanged in Saskatchewan and rose in the rest of the provinces. Newfoundland was the most unionized province in the first half of 1999, with 38.0% of all paid employees being union members. Alberta had the lowest rate at 23.0%.

In 1998 as a whole, the average hourly earnings of unionized workers were higher than those of non-unionized workers for both full-time (\$19.06 vs. \$15.57) and part-time (\$16.80 vs. \$9.81) workers. However, not all of those differences reflected union membership. Industry, occupation, educational attainment, and many other factors also determine wage rates. On average, unionized women working full time earned 90% of the hourly wages of their male counterparts. By contrast, unionized women who worked part time earned 8% more than their male counterparts.

This article is drawn from a report titled "Unionization—an update" that was published in the Autumn 1999 issue of Perspectives on labour and income (75-001-XPE, \$18/\$58). That report is also available as a PDF file on Statistics Canada's web site at www.statcan.ca. For further information, contact Ernest B. Akyeampong (613-951-4624, akyeern@statcan.ca) or Fiona Long (613-951-4628, longfio@statcan.ca), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.

New from Statistics Canada



Labour force update: Supplementary measures of unemployment Summer 1999

The Summer 1999 issue of *Labour force update* introduces a set of supplementary measures of unemployment. These measures provide a broader understanding of labour-market conditions for specific groups. They also shed more light on the extent of labour under-utilization in Canada.

Each quarter, *Labour force update* analyzes the latest information and trends relating to a particular labour-market issue. Its informative commentary, charts and tables provide concise and up-to-date information—a useful starting point for further research.

The Summer 1999 issue of Labour force update (71-005-XPB, \$29/\$96) is now available. Information from this issue can also be found on Statistics Canada's Web site. Visit www.statcan.ca and look under "In depth". For further information, contact Jeannine Usalcas (613-951-4720, fax: 613-951-2869, usaljea@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.

New from Statistics Canada

Back to school with the new E-STAT

1999

The 1999 edition of *E-STAT* is now available. Since 1992, this interactive learning tool has been evolving along with the changing needs of the education sector. The 1999 edition contains the latest data from the 1996 Census and a wide range of previous censuses, as well as updates from Statistics Canada's CANSIM database. Several features make the 1999 *E-STAT* more friendly and easier to use—a quick user's guide, a teachers' handbook and lesson plans/teaching activities written by educators for educators.

Now more affordable and accessible to educators, *E-STAT* brings current statistical and demographic data about Canada into the classroom. Using it, students learn how to develop critical thinking skills and how to transform data into colourful, easy-to-read charts and maps.

E-STAT 1999 is now available in Internet (10F0174XIB) and CD-ROM Windows (10F0174XCB) versions. To order, or for further information, contact the nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre or consult Statistics Canada's Web site at www.statcan.ca under "Education resources".

Statistical report on the health of Canadians

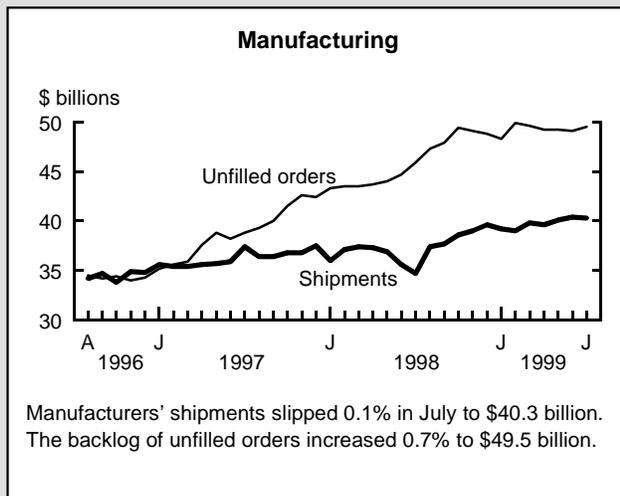
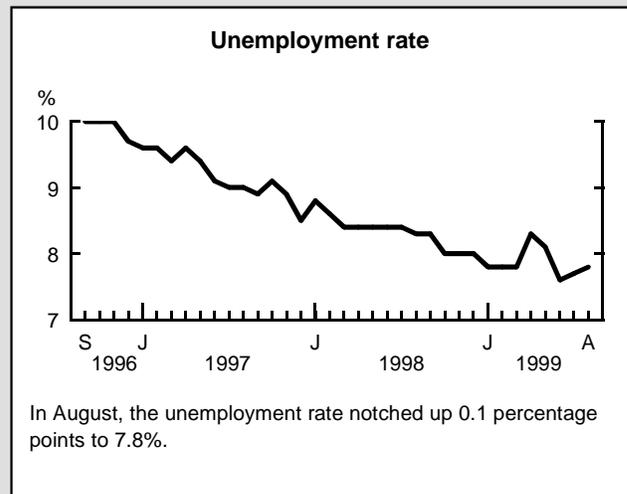
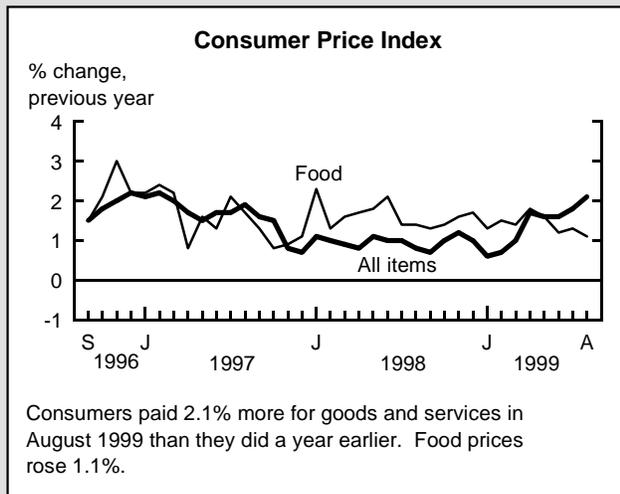
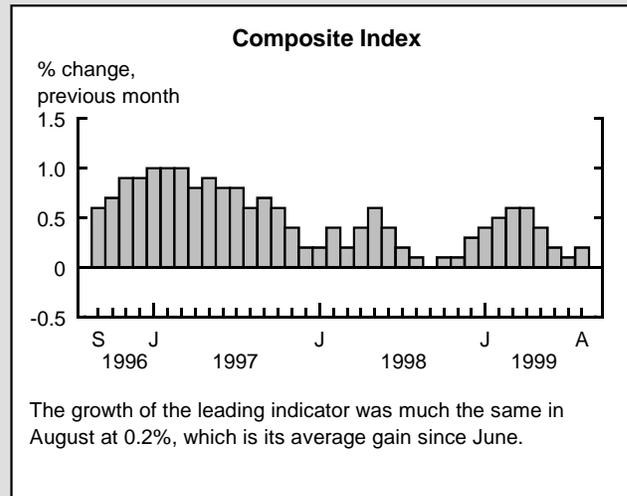
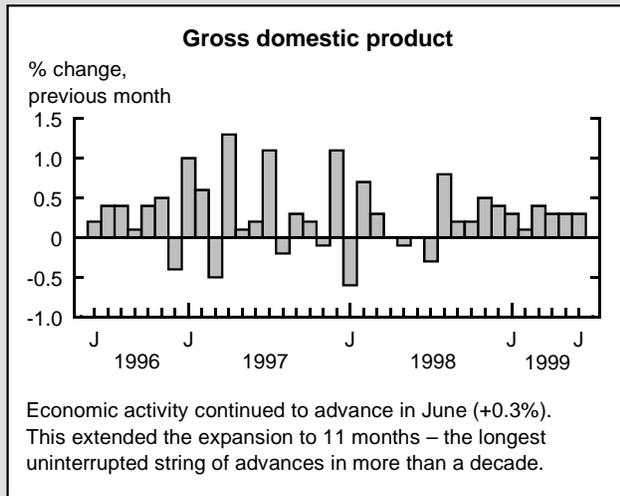
1999

This newly available report contains detailed statistics on more than 80 topics related to the health status of Canadians and the major determinants of health. The *Statistical report on the health of Canadians* draws primarily on results from the National Population Health Survey. It also uses other sources such as the National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth.

A section on health determinants explores social, economic and physical environments, health services, personal resources and coping, health knowledge and lifestyle behaviours. A section on health status examines individual well being, general health and function, injuries, conditions and diseases, and death.

Statistical report on the health of Canadians, 1999 (82-570-XIE, no charge) is now available online at www.statcan.ca. The menu path is "Products and services", and then "Downloadable publications (free)" followed by "Health". Print copies of this report are also available by phoning 613-954-5995. For further information, contact Larry Swain (613-951-8569, larry.swain@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.

Current trends



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

Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1992)	June	741.2	0.3%	3.6%
Composite Index (1981=100)	August*	215.7	0.2%	3.8%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q2 1999	37.2	1.6%	..
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 1999	83.8	0.5†	1.0†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	July*	21.7	1.3%	5.5%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	July	130.5	4.0%	8.0%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	July*	30.2	0.4%	10.3%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	August	14.67	0.0%	2.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	August	7.8	0.1†	-0.5†
Participation rate (%)	August	65.4	0.0†	0.3†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	June	609.89	0.1%	0.7%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	August	158	-1.3%	9.9%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	July*	30.0	1.8%	15.8%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	July*	26.9	0.3%	11.5%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	July*	3.2	0.4	1.3
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	July*	40.3	-0.1%	16.2%
New orders (\$ billion)	July*	40.7	1.1%	13.4%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	July*	49.5	0.7%	7.8%
Inventory/shipments ratio	July*	1.27	0.02	-0.15
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	August*	111.1	0.3%	2.1%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	July	122.1	1.2%	2.2%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	July	118.1	4.6%	10.0%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	July	100.8	0.2%	0.6%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

.. figures not available yet due to a survey redesign

Infomat

A weekly review

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Publications released from September 16 to 22, 1999

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription	
			Canada (C\$)	Outside Canada (US\$)
AGRICULTURE				
Farm cash receipts	Jan.-June 1999	21-001-XIB	15/48	
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND FINANCIAL FLOWS				
Canada's balance of international payments	Q2 1999	62-001-XPB	38/124	38/124
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS				
Inequalities in literacy skills among youth in Canada and the United States	No. 6, Sept. 1999			
Internet		89-552-MIE	no charge	
Paper		89-552-MPE	10	10
Touriscope vol. 15, no. 7: International travel, advance information	July 1999	66-001-PPB	8/73	8/73
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES				
Wholesale trade	July 1999	63-008-XIB	14/40	14/40
HEALTH STATISTICS				
Statistical report on the health of Canadians	1999	82-570-XIE	no charge	
LABOUR STATISTICS				
Labour force update: Supplementary measures of unemployment	Summer 1999	71-005-XPB	29/96	29/96
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Construction-type plywood	July 1999	35-001-XIB	5/47	
Electric lamps, light bulbs and tubes	August 1999	43-009-XIB	5/47	
Oils and fats	July 1999	32-006-XIB	5/47	
Pulpwood and wood residue statistics	July 1999	25-001-XIB	6/55	
Primary iron and steel	July 1999	41-001-XIB	5/47	
PRICES				
Industry price indexes	July 1999	62-011-XPB	22/217	22/217
The consumer price index	August 1999	62-001-XPB	11/103	11/103

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions (B signifies bilingual, E signifies English); those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; and -XPB or -XPE denote the paper version. XDB means the electronic version on diskette or compact disc.

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Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
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Manitoba

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Via Rail Building, Suite 200
123 Main Street
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Saskatchewan

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Park Plaza, Suite 440
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Regina, Saskatchewan
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Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
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Southern Alberta

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Statistics Canada
Discovery Place, Room 201
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Northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
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10001 Bellamy Hill
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Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
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British Columbia and the Yukon

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Statistics Canada
Library Square Tower, Suite 600
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Telecommunications Device for the Hearing Impaired

Toll free: 1 800 363-7629