



# The Daily

Statistics Canada

Tuesday, May 13, 1997  
For release at 8:30 a.m.

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## MAJOR RELEASES

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- **New motor vehicle sales, March 1997** 2  
Driven by a substantial increase in passenger car sales, new motor vehicle sales rose 8.5% in March.
- **Stocks of Canadian grain, March 31, 1997** 4  
Farm stocks of wheat and feed grains were considerably higher on March 31 than they were at the same time a year ago. Stocks of canola were lower.

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## MAJOR RELEASES

### New motor vehicle sales

March 1997

New motor vehicle sales rose 8.5% (seasonally adjusted) between February and March to reach 121,715 vehicles. The increase was driven by the largest monthly gain in passenger car sales (+12.3%) since March 1993.

Industry sources have suggested that the high sales pace of new motor vehicles will continue in April 1997.

New motor vehicle sales increased 17.0% between March 1996 and March 1997 (not seasonally adjusted). Vehicles built in North America and sold in Ontario contributed substantially to this year-over-year gain.

Monthly motor vehicle sales, which generally declined to a low in 1995 and 1996, now appear to be returning to levels experienced in earlier years. However, motor vehicle sales are highly volatile and subject to large fluctuations. Factors unique to the auto industry, such as the introduction of new models, advertising campaigns and incentives can affect the data significantly. It takes seven months after a given point in total new motor vehicle sales before a trend becomes certain.

#### Note to readers

Passenger 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.

Monthly data have been seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Provincial distributions of sales are based on unadjusted data.

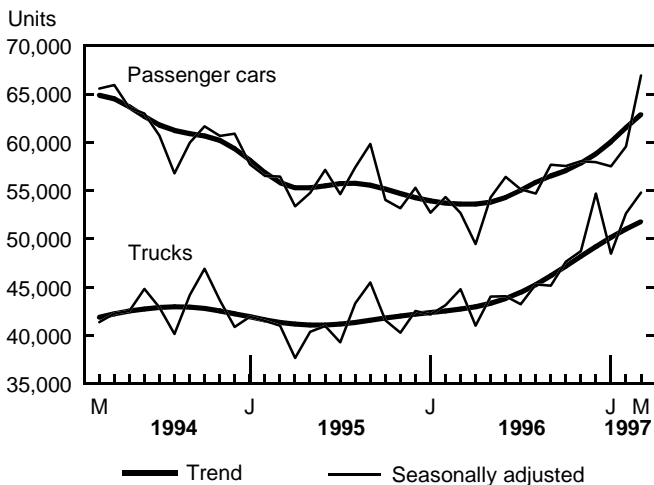
Truck sales continued to rise, up 4.1% in March over February, establishing a record number of vehicles sold in a one-month period at 54,795 (seasonally adjusted).

#### First quarter 1997

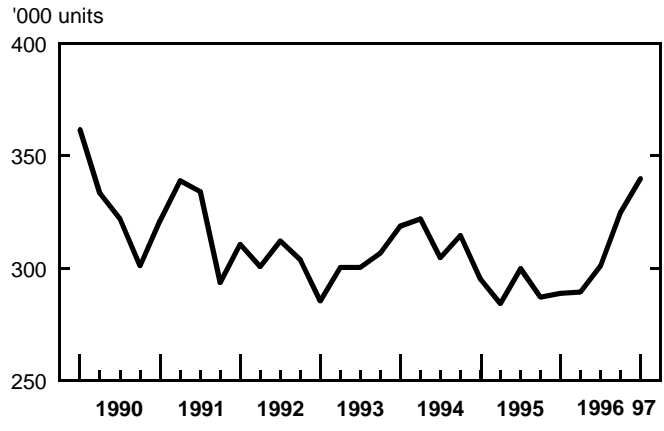
Performing at a record-setting pace, 155,888 trucks were sold in the first quarter of 1997 — the highest number ever registered in a quarter. In total, Canadians purchased 339,894 vehicles (seasonally adjusted) in the first quarter. This was almost 5% higher than the previous quarter, and the highest first quarter sales result since 1990.

The largest contributors to the first quarter advance were the Big Three automakers with sales gains of just under 9%.

Trend in car and truck sales on the rise



Quarterly sales of new motor vehicles



**Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.**

The March 1997 issue of *New motor vehicle sales* (63-007-XPB, \$16/\$160) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For analytical information, contact Doug Higgins at (613-951-9824; Internet: [higgdou@statcan.ca](mailto:higgdou@statcan.ca)), Retail Trade, Distributive Trades Division. For further information, contact Serge Dumouchel at (613-951-2210).

**New motor vehicle sales**

	Mar. 1996	Feb. 1997 <sup>r</sup>	Mar. 1997 <sup>p</sup>	Mar. 1996 to Mar. 1997	Feb. to Mar. 1997
seasonally adjusted					
				% change	
<b>New motor vehicles</b>	<b>97,447</b>	<b>112,204</b>	<b>121,715</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>
Passenger cars	52,669	59,574	66,920	27.1	12.3
North American <sup>1</sup>	45,185	51,193	59,471	31.6	16.2
Imports	7,483	8,381	7,449	-0.5	-11.1
Big Three automakers	33,780	34,936	43,240	28.0	23.8
Other automakers	18,889	24,638	23,680	25.4	-3.9
Trucks, vans and buses	44,779	52,630	54,795	22.4	4.1
	Mar. 1996	Mar. 1997 <sup>p</sup>	Mar. 1996 to Mar. 1997	Market share	
				Mar. 1996	Mar. 1997
unadjusted					
				%	
				% change	
<b>New motor vehicles</b>	<b>105,370</b>	<b>123,268</b>	<b>17.0</b>		
Passenger cars	55,415	63,443	14.5		
North American <sup>1</sup>	47,485	55,787	17.5	85.7	87.9
Imports	7,930	7,656	-3.5	14.3	12.1
Big Three automakers	35,173	39,768	13.1	63.5	62.7
Other automakers	20,242	23,675	17.0	36.5	37.3
Trucks, vans and buses	49,955	59,825	19.8		
North American <sup>1</sup>	47,610	55,190	15.9	95.3	92.3
Imports	2,345	4,635	97.7	4.7	7.7

<sup>r</sup> Revised figures.

<sup>p</sup> Preliminary figures.

<sup>1</sup> Manufactured or assembled in Canada, the United States or Mexico.



## Stocks of Canadian grain

March 31, 1997

Farm stocks of wheat and feed grains were considerably higher on March 31 than they were at the same time a year ago. Stocks of canola were lower.

Last year at this time, low levels of world wheat and feed grains raised international wheat prices to levels that enticed producers in Canada to devote more land to these crops. The increased harvests of wheat and barley in the fall of 1996 were responsible for the greater stocks this March. As farmers switched more land into wheat and barley, canola acreage decreased resulting in lower production followed by reduced stocks in March.

### Stocks of grain on farms on March 31

	1996	1997	1996 to 1997
	thousands of tonnes		% change
Wheat excluding durum	6,486	11,485	77.1
Barley	4,425	5,825	31.6
Corn	2,095	2,780	32.7
Canola	2,070	1,400	-32.4
Durum wheat	2,295	2,450	6.8
Oats	862	1,425	65.3
Soybeans	302	402	33.1
Flaxseed	290	285	-1.7

### Wheat stocks (excluding durum) on farms highest since 1994

There were 5 million tonnes more farm stocks of wheat (excluding durum) in March 1997 than a year earlier, due to a 5.4 million tonne increase in the 1996/97 crop-year. Total stocks, including stocks

#### Note to readers

The March Farm Stocks Survey of 9,230 farm operators is conducted by telephone interviewers during the last week of March. Farmers are asked to report their farm stocks of grains.

in commercial positions, were 1% above the five-year average. Marketing problems in the September-to-March period delayed an expected jump in exports for the crop-year.

### International and domestic markets use more barley

Farm stocks of barley increased 1.4 million metric tonnes compared with March 1996. The increase was due to a 2.9 million tonne gain in production this crop-year. Exports for the 1996/97 September-to-March period nearly doubled. Japan, China and Saudi Arabia accounted for most of the growth in exports. Domestic feeding-to-livestock for the same period was the highest ever recorded.

### Lowered stocks of canola due to decreased production

Total stocks of canola, including stocks in commercial positions, dropped by 25% compared with March 1996 due to the 22% decline in 1996/97 production. Deliveries from the farm to market in the September-to-March period were the lowest in four years.

*Field crop reporting series no. 3: Stocks of Canadian grain at March 31, 1997 (22-002-XPB, \$15/\$88) is now available. See How to order publications.*

For further information, contact Tony Dupuis (613-951-0572; Internet: [duputon@statcan.ca](mailto:duputon@statcan.ca)) or David Burroughs (613-951-5138; Internet: [burrdav@statcan.ca](mailto:burrdav@statcan.ca)), Crops Section, Agriculture Division. ■

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## OTHER RELEASES

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### **Plastic film and bags**

First quarter 1997

First quarter data on shipments of plastic film and bags are now available.

*Shipments of plastic film and bags manufactured from resin (47-007-XPB, \$10/\$33) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.*

For further information on this release, contact Suzette DesRosiers (613-951-9836; Internet: [desrosi@statcan.ca](mailto:desrosi@statcan.ca)), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

## PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

**Field crop reporting series no. 3: Stocks of Canadian grain at March 31, 1997**  
**Catalogue number 22-002-XPB**  
 (Canada: \$15/\$88; outside Canada: US\$15/US\$88).

**Labour force information, for the week ended April 19, 1997**  
**Catalogue number 71-001-PPB**  
 (Canada: \$11/\$103; outside Canada: US\$11/US\$103).

**All prices exclude sales tax.**

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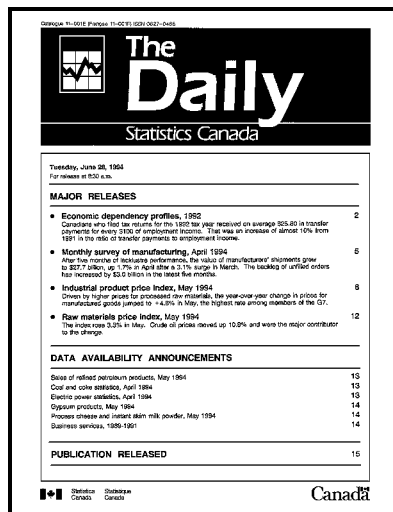
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