



# The Daily

Statistics Canada

**Monday, May 11, 1998**

For release at 8:30 a.m.

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## MAJOR RELEASES

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- **Stocks of grain, March 31, 1998**

On March 31, the total stocks of all major grains and oilseeds, with the exception of soybeans, were lower than last year. The total stocks of wheat were the lowest in nine years.

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- **New Housing Price Index, March 1998**

In March, the New Housing Price Index was 1.0% higher than a year earlier. This was the 13th consecutive month to register an annual increase. The index had shown annual decreases for 31 consecutive months, from July 1994 to January 1997.

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## OTHER RELEASES

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- Non-residential Building Construction Price Indexes, first quarter 1998

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- Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins, March 1998

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## PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

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### 1996 Census Results

On Tuesday, May 12, 1998, *The Daily* will release 1996 Census information on earnings and income.

Among the products available will be tables from The Nation series, which provide data for Canada, the provinces and territories, and census metropolitan areas. Electronic profiles from the Area Profiles series will also be released for census divisions and census subdivisions.

For further information, contact Media Relations (613-951-4636), Communications Division.



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## MAJOR RELEASES

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### Stocks of grain

March 31, 1998

On March 31, the total stocks of all major grains and oilseeds, with the exception of soybeans, were lower than last year. The total stocks of wheat were the lowest in nine years. Stocks of barley declined from last year, but were above the average of the last five years. Total canola stocks were lower than both last year and the five-year average.

#### Grain stocks at March 31

	1997	1998	1997 to 1998 %
	'000 tonnes		change
All wheat	19 357	12 559	-35
Wheat excluding durum	15 985	10 190	-36
Barley	7 098	6 489	-9
Corn for grain	4 225	3 723	-12
Canola	2 107	2 009	-5
Durum wheat	3 372	2 369	-30
Oats	1 801	1 459	-19
Soybeans	1 150	1 176	2
Flax	465	289	-38
Rye	97	88	-10

#### Wheat stocks lowest since 1989

Total stocks of wheat were 12 559 000 tonnes, 33% less than the five-year average of 18 716 000. Total wheat stocks have not been this low since 1989, when they were 10 042 000 tonnes. Total stocks are the stocks held on farms plus the stocks held in commercial positions. Commercial stocks make up about 40% of the total at this time of year.

The farm stocks of durum wheat and of wheat excluding durum both declined from last year. Major factors responsible for the decrease were a 19% drop in production in 1997 and a 40% increase in exports during the August-to-February period.

#### Barley stocks remain above average

Total stocks of barley, Canada's most prominent feed-grain, were 609 000 tonnes less than last year but remained above the five-year average of 6.4 million tonnes. Farm stocks dropped by 595 000 tonnes. The decrease in total stocks can be mostly attributed to a 12% drop in production in the 1997/98 crop year. The decrease would have been larger had exports, mainly to Japan and Saudi Arabia, not declined by 33% during the August-to-February period this year.

#### Canola stocks down

Farm stocks of canola fell by 182 000 tonnes, leaving the total stocks 5% below last year's level and 4% below the five-year average. Production growth of 22% in 1997 allowed producers to increase deliveries by 30% from August to the end of February this year. About half the deliveries are processed in Canada, whereas the other half is exported, mostly to Japan, Mexico and the United States.

*Field crop reporting series no. 3: Stocks of Canadian grain at March 31, 1998 (22-002-XPB, \$15/ \$88) is now available. See How to order publications.*

For further information on this release, contact David Burroughs (613-951-5138; [burrdav@statcan.ca](mailto:burrdav@statcan.ca)), or Dave Roeske (613-951-0572; [roesdav@statcan.ca](mailto:roesdav@statcan.ca)), Crops Section, Agriculture Division. ■

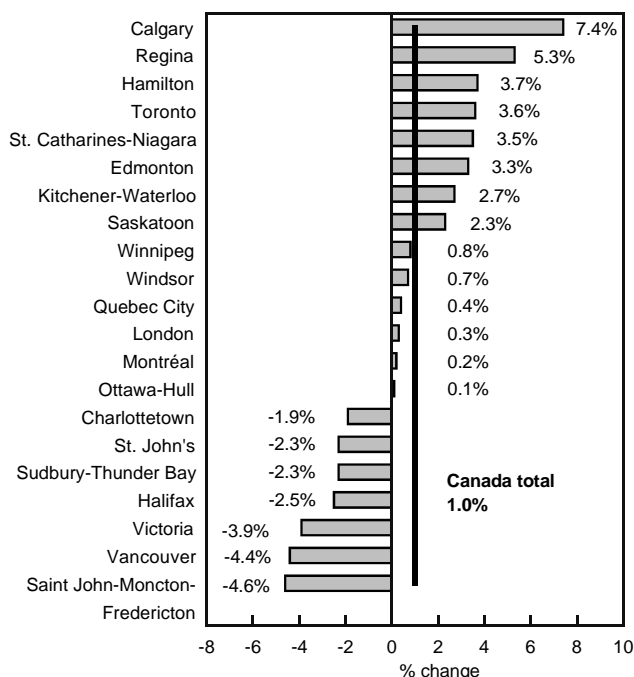
## New Housing Price Index

March 1998

In March, the New Housing Price Index was 1.0% higher than a year earlier. This was the 13th consecutive month to register an annual increase. The index had shown annual decreases for 31 consecutive months, from July 1994 to January 1997.

### New Housing Price Indexes (1992=100)

March 1997 to March 1998



Annual changes varied considerably among the cities surveyed. The largest annual increase was in the buoyant Calgary market (+7.4%). The largest annual decreases were noted in Saint John-Moncton-Fredericton (-4.6%) and Vancouver (-4.4%), where market conditions continue to be very competitive due, in part, to low levels of consumer confidence. Toronto has significant impact on the total index, so the annual 3.6% increase in the aggressive Toronto market was a major factor in the annual increase of the Canada-total or composite index.

From February to March 1998, the composite index increased 0.1%. This continues its generally upward movement since November 1996. March's 0.1% rise is the 13th monthly increase in the last 17 months.

The general improvement in new housing markets in recent months can be attributed to higher consumer confidence in Ontario and the Prairies, favourable mortgage interest rates, and strong activity in the resale market. However, despite the general optimism, the competitive nature of housing markets has moderated the increases or has contributed to decreases in housing prices, especially in surveyed cities on both the West and East Coasts, where economies have been less dynamic and consumer confidence levels seem to be lower.

Nevertheless, the outlook for future housing construction continues to be encouraging. Annual housing construction intentions (as measured by the value of residential building permits) were up 17.9% in 1997 compared with 1996. In addition, residential building permits in the first quarter of 1998 were up 1.9% from the fourth quarter of 1997, due to an increase in the value of permits for multi-family dwellings. Furthermore, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the total number of housing starts are forecast to rise 7.4% in 1998 compared with 1997, due to a combination of steady economic expansion, good job creation and low mortgage carrying costs.

### New Housing Price Indexes (1992=100)

	March 1997	Feb. 1998	March 1998	March 1997 to March 1998	Feb. 1998 to March 1998
	% change				
<b>Canada</b>	<b>98.9</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>
House only	98.6	100.1	100.2	1.6	0.1
Land only	101.3	101.6	101.7	0.4	0.1
St. John's	99.1	96.8	96.8	-2.3	-
Halifax	109.6	106.9	106.9	-2.5	-
Charlottetown	103.5	101.5	101.5	-1.9	-
Saint John-Moncton-Fredericton	98.5	94.1	94.0	-4.6	-0.1
Quebec City	98.4	98.8	98.8	0.4	-
Montréal	102.3	102.5	102.5	0.2	-
Ottawa-Hull	97.0	97.0	97.1	0.1	0.1
Toronto	97.6	101.1	101.1	3.6	-
Hamilton	98.3	101.4	101.9	3.7	0.5
St. Catharines-Niagara	95.9	99.2	99.3	3.5	0.1
Kitchener-Waterloo	97.0	99.6	99.6	2.7	-
London	97.4	97.3	97.7	0.3	0.4
Windsor	104.6	105.3	105.3	0.7	-
Sudbury-Thunder Bay	103.5	100.8	101.1	-2.3	0.3
Winnipeg	111.0	111.9	111.9	0.8	-
Regina	116.7	122.9	122.9	5.3	-
Saskatoon	109.3	111.3	111.8	2.3	0.4
Calgary	112.7	120.5	121.0	7.4	0.4
Edmonton	103.4	106.3	106.8	3.3	0.5
Vancouver	93.3	89.5	89.2	-4.4	-0.3
Victoria	84.6	82.0	81.3	-3.9	-0.9

- Nil or zero.

**Available on CANSIM: matrix9921**

The first quarter 1998 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007-XPB, \$24/\$79) will be available in June. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Elvira Marinelli (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; [infounit@statcan.ca](mailto:infounit@statcan.ca)), Client Services Unit, Prices Division. ■

## OTHER RELEASES

### Non-residential Building Construction Price Indexes

First quarter 1998

The Non-residential Building Construction Price Index composite for the first quarter of 1998 stood at 111.7 (1992=100), a 0.7% increase from the previous quarter and 2.5% higher than the same quarter a year earlier.

Between the fourth quarter 1997 and the first quarter of 1998, on a 1992=100 basis, the index for Vancouver rose 1.2%. This was followed by the indexes for Calgary and Edmonton (+1.1%), Halifax (+0.7%), Montréal (+0.5%), Toronto (+0.4%), and Ottawa (+0.3%).

Non-residential Building Construction Price Indexes indicate changes in construction costs in seven major urban areas in Canada (Halifax, Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver). Three construction categories—industrial, commercial and institutional buildings—are represented by selected models (a light factory building, an office building, a warehouse, a shopping centre and a school).

Besides the city indexes and seven-city composites, further breakdown of the change in costs is available by trade group (structural, architectural, mechanical and electrical) within the building types. These price indexes are derived from surveys of general and special trade-group contractors. They report data on various categories of costs (material, labour, equipment, taxes, overhead and profit) relevant to the detailed construction specifications included in the surveys.

### Non-residential Building Construction Price Index (1992=100)

	First quarter 1998	First quarter 1997 to First quarter 1998	Fourth quarter 1997 to First quarter 1998
		% change	
<b>Composite</b>	<b>111.7</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>0.7</b>
Halifax	104.0	-2.7	0.7
Montréal	109.2	3.4	0.5
Ottawa	110.3	2.3	0.3
Toronto	112.0	1.9	0.4
Calgary	112.3	3.6	1.1
Edmonton	111.9	2.9	1.1
Vancouver	114.6	2.4	1.2

**Available on CANSIM: matrix 9930-9931.**

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For further information on this release, contact Elvira Marinelli (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; [marielv@statcan.ca](mailto:marielv@statcan.ca)), Client Services Unit, Prices Division. ■

### Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins

March 1998

Chemical firms produced 205 416 metric tonnes of polyethylene synthetic resins in March, a 0.10% decrease from 205 622 tonnes in March 1997.

For January to March 1998, production totalled 582 177 tonnes, up 6.6% from 546 239 tonnes a year earlier.

Data are also available on the production of 3 other types of synthetic resins and 24 industrial chemicals.

**Available on CANSIM: matrix 951.**

The March 1998 issue of *Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins* (46-002-XPB, \$7/62) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Suzette DesRosiers (613-951-9836; [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, 1998, May 1998**  
**Catalogue number 22-002-XPB**  
(Canada: \$15/\$88; outside Canada: US\$15/US\$88).

**All prices exclude sales tax.**

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; and -XPB or -XPE denote a paper version.

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**The Daily**  
Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 3, 1997  
For release at 9:30 a.m.

**MAJOR RELEASES**

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2  
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 40 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 noticeably weak again in 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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