

# The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, May 20, 1999

For release at 8:30 a.m.

## MAJOR RELEASES

- **Canadian international merchandise trade, March 1999** 3  
Higher exports and relatively stable imports in March accentuated the positive merchandise trade balance in the first quarter of 1999, particularly with the United States.

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### Canadian economic observer

May 1999

The May issue of Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, *Canadian economic observer*, analyses current economic conditions, summarizes the major economic events that occurred in April and presents a feature article on seasonality in employment. A separate statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and graphs on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and the major industrial nations.

The May 1999 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, contact Cyndi Bloskie (613-951-3634, [ceo@statcan.ca](mailto:ceo@statcan.ca)), Current Economic Analysis Group.



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## MAJOR RELEASES

### Canadian international merchandise trade

March 1999

Exports in March almost returned to the record level set in January. Strong automobile and natural gas exports to the United States, together with aircraft exports were offset by sharp drops in wheat exports to North Africa, and exports of gold, uranium, aluminum and various minerals.

Imports remained virtually unchanged in March. The sharp increase in imports of industrial goods, energy and automotive products was almost completely offset by the drop in machinery and equipment imports, particularly aircraft.

**Note to readers**

*Merchandise trade is one component of the current account of Canada's balance of payments, which also includes trade in services.*

#### Exports almost return to January levels but remain higher than a year earlier

Although export growth slowed during the first quarter of 1999 compared with the fourth quarter 1998, exports were still 10.8% higher than the first quarter of 1998.

Exports advanced 0.6% in March, coming close to the record level set in January. Exports to the United States, Japan and the European Union increased while exports to other OECD countries and other countries declined. Exports to other countries fell 23.0%, chiefly due to a sharp decline in aircraft exports to the Middle East and South Africa, and wheat exports to North Africa. First-quarter exports to other countries were 16.9% lower than during the first quarter of 1998, mainly because of low export prices for various minerals, wheat and coal.

The sharp increase in passenger car exports in March contributed most to the increase in total exports to the United States. New model production starts on Canadian assembly lines in the fall of 1998 resulted in a 27.5% increase in the value of exports for the first three months of 1999, compared with the same period last year.

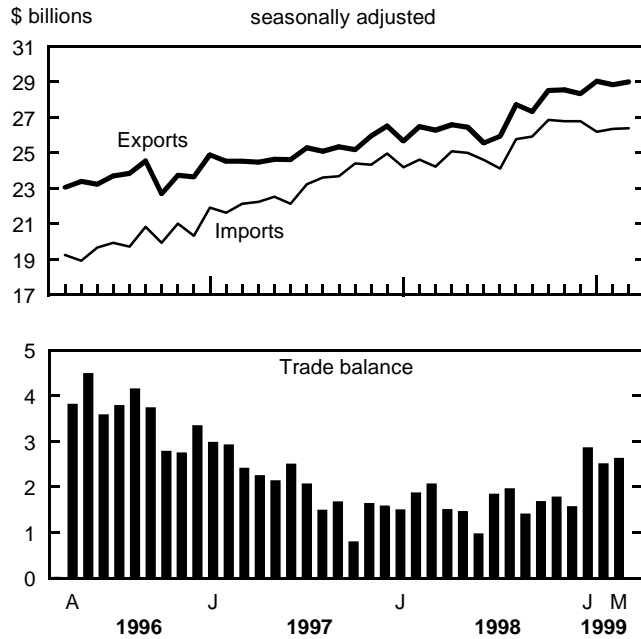
Energy exports rose in March, due primarily to price increases in natural gas (+11.3%) and crude oil (+11.4%). First quarter exports from this sector were 4.7% higher than during the fourth quarter of 1998 — the strongest quarterly growth since the fourth quarter of 1996.

Extremely volatile gold and uranium exports pushed the industrial goods sector down in March, after driving the sector up in February. Persistent slumps in mineral exports, particularly copper and nickel, despite price recoveries, also contributed to declines in the industrial goods sector.

#### Imports dropped in the first quarter

Imports for all commodity sectors fell in the first quarter of 1999 compared with the fourth quarter of 1998. The machinery and equipment and industrial goods sectors were hardest hit, a reflection of falling

**Exports, imports and trade balance**



The trade balance remained strong, rising slightly from a revised \$2.5 billion in February to \$2.6 billion in March. The quarterly trade surplus with the United States reached a record level, while the trade surplus with other countries dropped, mainly because of fewer exports of aircraft and weak ore prices.

investment intentions for 1999. Specifically, declining investment in the mines, quarries and oil wells industry was reflected in reduced drilling and mining equipment imports, which dropped 21.6% between the fourth quarter of 1998 and first quarter of 1999.

Imports of industrial goods rose slightly in March after two months of decline, mainly due to strong imports of gold, hydraulic valves and other automotive parts, and organic chemical gardening products.

All energy product sub-sectors rose in March, chiefly due to the steep increase in crude oil prices (+10.0%) and volumes brought on by the OPEC decision to curtail production.

Automotive product imports rose slightly in March as passenger car imports grew 5.9%. The sector has remained virtually unchanged since the beginning of the year, reaching levels at close to half a billion dollars more than one year ago, mainly due to parts imports for new Canadian production lines added by Daimler-Chrysler, Ford and Honda.

Despite a sharp drop (-52.8%) in aircraft imports in March, the first quarter of 1999 remained 14.0% higher than during the fourth quarter of last year, because of February's spectacular jump. With investment intentions in 1999 staying very high in this sector, imports should remain robust for most of the year.

After a slight drop in February, imports from "other countries" rose 8.2% in March, chiefly due to strong imports of tents, oil, communications equipment and computers, and candles. Imports from the European Union dropped slightly due to lower new and used aircraft imports.

## Revisions

In general, merchandise trade data are revised on an ongoing basis for each month of the current year. Factors influencing revisions include late receipt of import and export documentation, incorrect information on customs forms, replacement of estimates with actual figures (once available), changes in classification of merchandise based on more current information, and seasonal adjustments. Consult the appropriate CANSIM matrices for revised data.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 3618, 3619, 3651, 3685-3713, 3720, 3887-3913, 8430-8435 and 8438-8447.**

This release contains a summary of the merchandise trade data to be published shortly in *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188 or 65-001-XIB, \$14/\$141). The publication will include tables by commodity and country on a customs basis. Current account data (which incorporate merchandise trade statistics, service transactions, investment income and transfers) are available quarterly in *Canada's balance of international payments* (67-001-XPB, \$38/\$124). See *How to order publications*.

Readers wishing to receive merchandise trade data on a more timely basis may obtain them by fax on the morning of release.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, or data quality of this release, contact Jocelyne Elibani, (613-951-9647; 1 800 294-5583), Marketing and Client Services Section, International Trade Division. □

## Merchandise trade

	Jan. 1999	Feb. 1999	March 1999	Jan. to Feb. 1999	Feb. to March 1999	Jan. to March 1998	Jan. to March 1999	Jan.-March 1998 to Jan.-March 1999	March 1998 to March 1999
seasonally adjusted, \$ current									
	\$ millions			% change		\$ millions		% change	
<b>Principal trading partners</b>									
<b>Exports</b>									
United States	24,819	24,465	24,986	-1.4	2.1	64,387	74,270	15.3	15.2
Japan	822	697	725	-15.2	4.0	2,487	2,244	-9.8	-10.3
European Union	1,506	1,426	1,440	-5.3	1.0	4,574	4,372	-4.4	-2.6
Other OECD countries <sup>1</sup>	528	599	574	13.4	-4.2	1,838	1,701	-7.5	-18.8
All other countries	1,357	1,647	1,269	21.4	-23.0	5,143	4,273	-16.9	-20.5
Total	29,032	28,834	28,996	-0.7	0.6	78,428	86,862	10.8	10.3
<b>Imports</b>									
United States	20,463	20,172	20,142	-1.4	-0.1	56,303	60,777	7.9	8.2
Japan	785	826	834	5.2	1.0	2,433	2,445	0.5	0.5
European Union	2,019	2,368	2,286	17.3	-3.5	5,977	6,673	11.6	15.0
Other OECD countries <sup>1</sup>	962	1,043	1,030	8.4	-1.2	2,797	3,035	8.5	7.5
All other countries	1,962	1,934	2,092	-1.4	8.2	5,533	5,988	8.2	13.2
Total	26,192	26,343	26,385	0.6	0.2	73,042	78,920	8.0	8.9
<b>Balance</b>									
United States	4,356	4,293	4,844	...	...	8,084	13,493	...	...
Japan	37	-129	-109	...	...	54	-201	...	...
European Union	-513	-942	-846	...	...	-1,403	-2,301	...	...
Other OECD countries <sup>1</sup>	-434	-444	-456	...	...	-959	-1,334	...	...
All other countries	-605	-287	-823	...	...	-390	-1,715	...	...
Total	2,840	2,491	2,611	...	...	5,386	7,942	...	...
<b>Principal commodity groupings</b>									
<b>Exports</b>									
Agricultural and fishing products	2,095	2,143	2,064	2.3	-3.7	6,326	6,302	-0.4	0.7
Energy products	1,820	1,797	1,939	-1.3	7.9	5,860	5,556	-5.2	1.8
Forestry products	3,130	3,119	3,111	-0.4	-0.3	8,778	9,360	6.6	6.6
Industrial goods and materials	4,613	4,709	4,576	2.1	-2.8	14,442	13,898	-3.8	-5.5
Machinery and equipment	6,939	6,781	6,829	-2.3	0.7	18,660	20,549	10.1	8.0
Automotive products	8,194	8,070	8,262	-1.5	2.4	18,856	24,526	30.1	29.2
Other consumer goods	1,155	1,137	1,148	-1.6	1.0	2,880	3,440	19.4	17.3
Special transactions trade <sup>2</sup>	592	590	610	-0.3	3.4	1,099	1,792	63.1	60.9
Other BOP adjustments	494	489	456	-1.0	-6.7	1,527	1,439	-5.8	-6.6
<b>Imports</b>									
Agricultural and fishing products	1,476	1,434	1,481	-2.8	3.3	4,138	4,391	6.1	7.6
Energy products	599	631	765	5.3	21.2	2,305	1,995	-13.4	11.4
Forestry products	212	221	223	4.2	0.9	600	656	9.3	12.1
Industrial goods and materials	5,020	4,962	5,160	-1.2	4.0	14,592	15,142	3.8	6.7
Machinery and equipment	8,685	9,011	8,554	3.8	-5.1	23,961	26,250	9.6	9.3
Automotive products	6,202	6,071	6,191	-2.1	2.0	16,401	18,464	12.6	10.5
Other consumer goods	3,001	3,038	3,063	1.2	0.8	8,045	9,102	13.1	13.2
Special transactions trade <sup>2</sup>	481	461	448	-4.2	-2.8	1,515	1,390	-8.3	-10.0
Other BOP adjustments	517	512	499	-1.0	-2.5	1,486	1,528	2.8	0.2

... Figures not appropriate or not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Includes Australia, Iceland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Poland, South Korea, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

<sup>2</sup> These are mainly low valued transactions, value of repairs to equipment, and goods returned to country of origin.

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## OTHER RELEASES

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### New release date for Quarterly financial statistics for enterprises

First quarter 1999

Over the last year the process of producing the Quarterly financial statistics for enterprises has been undergoing a major redesign. Major factors in the redesign have included: implementation of the new North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), new questionnaires, a new sample along with related methodological changes and new computer systems designed to ensure Y2K compliance. Due to these substantial changes the data will not be ready for release on the previously scheduled date of May 26, 1999. Instead a brief summary of data will be published June 9, 1999. More complete data will be released later in June.

For further information, contact Krishna Sahay (613-951-6904, [sahakri@statcan.ca](mailto:sahakri@statcan.ca)) or Jean-Pierre Simard (613-951-0741), Industrial Organization and Finance Division. ■

### Export and import price indexes

March 1999

Current- and fixed-weighted export and import price indexes (1992=100) on a balance-of-payments basis are now available. Price indexes are listed from January 1992 to March 1999 for the five commodity sections and the major commodity groups (62 exports and 61 imports).

Current- and fixed-weighted U.S. price indexes (1992=100) are also available on a customs basis. Price indexes are listed from January 1992 to March 1999. Included with the U.S. commodity indexes are the 10 all-countries and U.S. only standard international trade classification section indexes.

Indexes for the five commodity sections and the major commodity groups are also now available on a customs basis.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices: 3618, 3619, 3651, 3685, 8430-8435 and 8438-8447.**

The March 1999 issue of *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188 or 65-001-XIB, \$14/\$141) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jocelyne Elibani (613-951-9647

or 1 800 294-5583), Marketing and Client Services Section, International Trade Division. ■

### Organized crime activity: Pilot survey results

1998

Released today is the report *Organized crime activity in Canada, 1998: Results of a pilot survey of 16 police services*. This report examines the feasibility of collecting quantitative information on organized criminal activity in Canada.

Sixteen major police services from across the country were asked to provide data about organized crime groups operating in their jurisdiction. This included information about the size and composition of each of these organizations, the links between various criminal organizations, as well as comparisons of the types of illegal activities engaged in by each organized crime group.

*Organized crime activity in Canada, 1998: Results of a pilot survey of 16 police services* (85-548-XIE, \$26) is now available on the Internet. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (613-951-9023; 1 800 387-2231). ■

### Public use microdata file: Families file

1996 Census

Public use microdata files are based on a 2.8% sample of unaggregated, anonymous records from the 1996 Census database. This unique series allows the user to combine variables and generate tables not included in any other census products. The series is composed of three files: the Individuals file, the Families file, and the Households and housing file. The price for one file is \$1,000, with second and third files costing \$300 and \$200 respectively.

Released today is the second in the series: the *Families file - Flat file (ASCII)*, (95M0014XCB). Featuring 145 variables, the file contains details of family composition in Canada, such as information on labour force activity and income for census family and non-family persons.

The geographic information for this product is limited. Data are provided for the provinces and territories, 12 selected census subdivisions, and 19 selected census metropolitan areas.

The CD-ROM released today contains the data file in flat ASCII format only and includes input record descriptions in both SAS and SPSS syntaxes. A second CD-ROM, to be released later, will contain the data file in both the flat ASCII format and the *Beyond 20/20* format accompanied by the *Beyond 20/20* analytical software.

For more information or to purchase the *Public use microdata files: Families file*, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre. ■

### Education and the wage gap between younger and older workers

The research paper "The returns to education, and the increasing wage gap between younger and older workers" (Research paper no. 131) is now available.

Over the last two decades, the wage gap between young and older workers has increased substantially in Canada. During this period, the education attainment of older workers has risen faster than that of young workers. The study shows that during the 1980s, the growth in the relative educational attainment of older workers has contributed to about one-quarter of the increase in the age-wage gap. During the 1990s, the age-wage gap increased to a much lesser extent. Changes in the relative educational attainment accounted for a much greater proportion of the much smaller increase in the gap: almost one-half for men and over three-quarters for women.

Statistics Canada's Analytical Studies Branch produces research papers on a variety of topics such as labour, business firm dynamics, mortality, immigration, statistical computing and simulation among others. These papers are based on research conducted by branch staff, visiting fellows and academic associates. The series can be downloaded from the Internet free of charge ([www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)). The series is also available on paper for \$5 by contacting H  l  ne Lamadeleine (613-951-5231).

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Ren   Morissette (613-951-3608) or Garnett Picot (613-951-8214), Analytical Studies Branch. ■

### Steel primary forms

Week ending May 15, 1999 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending May 15, 1999, totalled 309 937, up 1.6% from the week-earlier 305 083 tonnes and up 14.4% from the year-earlier 270 928 tonnes. The cumulative total at the end of the week was 5 856 412 tonnes, a 4.1% decrease compared with 6 105 652 tonnes for the same period in 1998.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, or data quality of this release, contact Greg Milsom (613-951-7093; [milsomg@statcan.ca](mailto:milsomg@statcan.ca)), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

### Stocks of frozen poultry meat

May 1, 1999 (preliminary)

Data for stocks of frozen poultry meat in cold storage on May 1, 1999 are now available.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 5675-5677.**

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Sandra Gielfeldt (613-951-2505), Livestock and Animal Products Section, Agriculture Division. ■

### Farm product prices

First quarter 1999

Farm product prices from January to March 1999 are now available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Bernie Rosien (613-951-2441; fax: 613-951-3868), Farm Income and Prices Section, Agriculture Division. ■

## PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

**Canadian economic observer**, May 1999  
**Catalogue number 11-010-XPB**  
(Canada: \$23/\$227; outside Canada: US\$23/US\$227).

**Gas utilities**, January 1999  
**Catalogue number 55-002-XPB**  
(Canada: \$17/\$165; outside Canada: US\$17/US\$165).

**Organized crime activity in Canada, 1998: Results of a pilot survey of 16 police services**  
**Catalogue number 85-548-XIE**  
(Canada: \$26).

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**The Daily**  
Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 3, 1999  
For release at 9:30 a.m.

**MAJOR RELEASES**

- **Urban transit, 1998** 2  
Discards the stereotypes on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1998, each Canadian took an average of about 2.5 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1998** 4  
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was noticeably weak again in 1998, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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Statistics Canada

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