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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Friday, August 20, 1999
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Retail trade,** June 1999 2
  In June, consumers spent more on big ticket items sold in furniture stores and by motor vehicle dealers. However, they bought less from other types of stores. Retail sales edged up 0.3% to $21.4 billion following a similar increase in May.

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MAJOR RELEASES

Retail trade

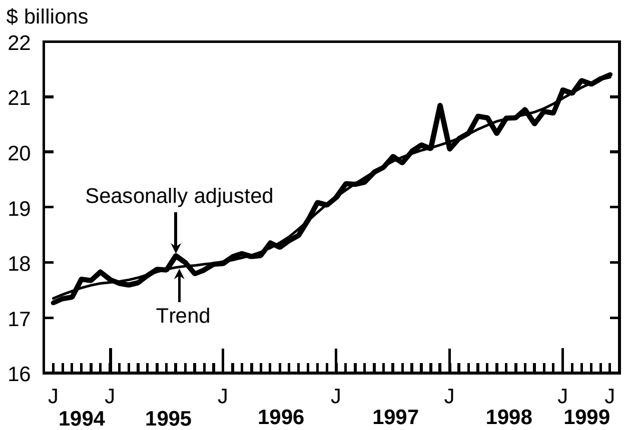
June 1999

In June, consumers spent more on big ticket items sold in furniture stores and by motor vehicle dealers. However, they bought less from other types of stores. Retail sales edged up 0.3% to $21.4 billion following a similar increase in May (+0.4%).

Retail sales were up 0.7% in the second quarter of 1999 compared with the previous quarter. This increase followed a 2.5% rise in sales during the first quarter. Furniture stores (+1.7%) led sales increases in the second quarter while drug stores (-0.2%) posted the only decline. All remaining retail sectors showed increases that ranged from 0.6% to 0.8% in the second quarter of 1999.

Overall, retail sales have picked up considerably since the fall of 1998 after slowing down in the spring and summer of the same year. Previously, sales had generally been increasing since early 1996.

Retail sales were up for a second consecutive month in June



Big ticket items are big sellers

Retailers in the furniture (+2.7%) and the automotive (+2.3%) sectors reported the only sales gains in June. All other sectors posted lower sales, with clothing stores (-2.8%) and food stores (-1.6%) leading the way.

For a second consecutive month, consumers bought considerably more in furniture stores (+5.0% in May and +2.7% in June). The strong sales in this sector came entirely from household furniture and appliance stores. Sales in furniture stores, partially stimulated by a stronger housing market, have generally been increasing since the spring of 1996.

The automotive sector bounced back in June (+2.3%) following two months of declining sales. The advance in this sector came almost entirely from motor and recreational vehicle dealers (+3.4%). Previously, these dealers had reported lower sales in May (-2.8%) and April (-1.5%). These declines followed five consecutive monthly gains, starting in November 1998. More modest increases were reported during the rest of 1998 and most of 1997.

Also in the automotive sector, gasoline service stations reported a 0.6% decline in sales in June after three consecutive monthly gains. Recent fluctuations in gas prices played a key role in the sales of gasoline service stations. Gas prices declined 1.5% in June after three months of increases. Since the beginning of 1999, sales by gasoline service stations have gained most of the ground lost during the period of diminishing sales observed from the spring of 1996 to the end of 1998.

Clothing stores showed the largest decline

All types of clothing stores posted declining sales in June, resulting in a 2.8% reduction for the sector. This decline followed a 1.0% gain in May. Overall, sales in clothing stores have generally been increasing since the beginning of 1996 despite periods of weaker sales in the first few months of 1997 and most of 1998. Family and children's clothing stores classified in the other clothing category continue to be the source of strength in this sector.

June's 1.6% decline in food store sales offset the gain observed in May (+1.5%). Sales in food stores have generally been increasing since the spring of 1996 with two periods of weaker sales in the spring of 1997 and from the spring of 1998 until the end of the year.

After a 1.8% increase in May, sales in general merchandise stores fell 0.5% in June. Within this sector, sales declined in both department stores (-0.7%) and other general merchandise stores (-0.2%). Overall, other general merchandise stores are continuing the period of sales increases that started in early 1997. In contrast, over the same period, sales in department stores flattened out in the spring and summer of 1998 but have gained strength since.

Retailers in western provinces and Ontario posted gains

Higher sales in Alberta (+1.9%) and Manitoba (+0.9%) resulted in a 1.3% increase in retail sales for the Prairie provinces. Most sectors contributed to sales advances in this region. June's increase followed two consecutive monthly declines in May (-0.5%) and April (-0.7%). Overall, retail sales in the Prairie provinces have remained generally flat since the beginning of 1998 after increasing in the previous two years.

Higher sales in the automotive and furniture sectors pushed up retail sales in Ontario by 0.7% in June. This was the sixth consecutive monthly gain for the province's retailers. Over the course of this spending spree from December 1998 to June 1999, retail sales in Ontario rose 5.7%. Sales in the province have generally been increasing since mid-1996.

In June, consumers in British Columbia increased spending by 0.5% in retail stores, with most sectors contributing to the increase. This followed a 1.0% decline in May. After experiencing a period of declining sales during most of 1998, retailers in British Columbia have generally been reporting modest sales advances since the end of 1998.

Retail sales were down in Quebec and New Brunswick

Lower sales in all sectors, except for the automotive and furniture sectors, pushed down total retail sales in Quebec by 0.9% in June. Retail sales in this province have been weakening in the last three months after a period of general increases from mid-1998 to the beginning of 1999.

Retail sales in Atlantic Canada edged down slightly in June (-0.2%) following a 4.6% gain in May. Advances in Prince Edward Island (+4.9%), Nova Scotia (+1.3%) and Newfoundland (+0.2%) were offset by the 3.3% decline in New Brunswick. With the exception of automotive and furniture stores, all sectors in Atlantic Canada posted weaker sales in June. After experiencing a period of stagnant sales during most of 1998, retailers in Atlantic Canada have generally been reporting sales increases since the fall of that year.

Related indicators for July

Employment increased 0.3% in July after five months of little change. Sources in the automotive industry indicated a rise in the number of new motor vehicles sold in July. Housing starts were down 4.5% in July. According to the Consumer Price Index, the price of gasoline climbed 4.1% in July compared with June.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2399, 2400, 2299, 2397, 2398, and 2401-2420.

The June 1999 issue of *Retail trade* (63-005-XPB, $21/$206; 63-005-XIB, $16/$155) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3549; 1-877-421-3067; *retailinfo@statcan.ca*). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; *gratpau@statcan.ca*), Retail Trade Section, Distributive Trades Division. □

Retail sales

	June 1998	March 1999r	April 1999r	May 1999r	June 1999p	May to June 1999	June 1998 to June 1999
	seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Food	**4,823**	**4,884**	**4,880**	**4,955**	**4,878**	**-1.6**	**1.1**
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,464	4,518	4,522	4,590	4,517	-1.6	1.2
All other food stores	359	367	358	366	361	-1.2	0.5
Drug and patent medicine stores	**1,083**	**1,116**	**1,105**	**1,111**	**1,107**	**-0.4**	**2.2**
Clothing	**1,123**	**1,198**	**1,197**	**1,209**	**1,175**	**-2.8**	**4.7**
Shoe stores	133	141	141	141	125	-11.3	-6.2
Men's clothing stores	127	129	127	127	124	-2.4	-2.8
Women's clothing stores	353	373	370	374	366	-2.2	3.6
Other clothing stores	509	555	558	567	560	-1.2	10.1
Furniture	**1,044**	**1,097**	**1,068**	**1,121**	**1,152**	**2.7**	**10.3**
Household furniture and appliance stores	845	891	861	915	952	4.1	12.7
Household furnishings stores	199	206	207	207	200	-3.4	0.3
Automotive	**7,826**	**8,235**	**8,225**	**8,084**	**8,267**	**2.3**	**5.6**
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	5,356	5,689	5,606	5,447	5,634	3.4	5.2
Gasoline service stations	1,298	1,318	1,388	1,396	1,387	-0.6	6.9
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,172	1,228	1,231	1,241	1,246	0.4	6.4
General merchandise stores	**2,249**	**2,440**	**2,445**	**2,488**	**2,476**	**-0.5**	**10.1**
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	**2,185**	**2,324**	**2,309**	**2,354**	**2,343**	**-0.5**	**7.2**
Other semi-durable goods stores	664	713	699	710	708	-0.3	6.6
Other durable goods stores	561	599	585	582	578	-0.8	3.0
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	960	1,012	1,025	1,062	1,057	-0.4	10.2
Total, retail sales	**20,333**	**21,294**	**21,229**	**21,323**	**21,398**	**0.3**	**5.2**
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	**14,977**	**15,605**	**15,623**	**15,876**	**15,764**	**-0.7**	**5.3**
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland	326	352	335	348	348	0.2	6.8
Prince Edward Island	88	93	90	94	98	4.9	11.2
Nova Scotia	631	661	633	669	677	1.3	7.3
New Brunswick	500	520	522	543	525	-3.3	5.1
Quebec	4,642	5,020	4,980	4,983	4,939	-0.9	6.4
Ontario	7,675	8,085	8,099	8,163	8,221	0.7	7.1
Manitoba	729	751	741	729	736	0.9	1.0
Saskatchewan	625	628	634	633	632	-0.2	1.2
Alberta	2,310	2,366	2,343	2,336	2,379	1.9	3.0
British Columbia	2,742	2,745	2,783	2,754	2,769	0.5	1.0
Yukon	26	27	27	28	28	0.2	9.3
Northwest Territories	..	31	28	30	30	-0.1	..
Nunavut	..	15	15	14	15	4.5	..

r *Revised figures.*
p *Preliminary figures.*
.. *Figures not available.*

Retail sales

	June 1998	May 1999[r]	June 1999[p]	June 1998 to June 1999
	unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Food	**4,815**	**5,079**	**4,922**	**2.2**
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,446	4,700	4,546	2.3
All other food stores	369	379	375	1.7
Drug and patent medicine stores	**1,062**	**1,094**	**1,089**	**2.5**
Clothing	**1,108**	**1,234**	**1,148**	**3.6**
Shoe stores	146	165	138	-5.8
Men's clothing stores	133	126	126	-5.5
Women's clothing stores	358	402	372	3.9
Other clothing stores	471	541	513	8.9
Furniture	**1,026**	**1,040**	**1,124**	**9.6**
Household furniture and appliance stores	813	835	910	11.9
Household furnishings stores	213	205	214	0.6
Automotive	**9,167**	**9,284**	**9,743**	**6.3**
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	6,503	6,464	6,886	5.9
Gasoline service stations	1,369	1,453	1,468	7.3
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,295	1,366	1,389	7.3
General merchandise stores	**2,169**	**2,453**	**2,388**	**10.1**
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	**2,257**	**2,481**	**2,432**	**7.8**
Other semi-durable goods stores	711	806	761	7.0
Other durable goods stores	553	583	567	2.6
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	993	1,091	1,104	11.2
Total, retail sales	**21,603**	**22,664**	**22,846**	**5.8**
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	**15,100**	**16,200**	**15,960**	**5.7**
Provinces and territories				
Newfoundland	348	371	373	7.4
Prince Edward Island	98	99	109	11.5
Nova Scotia	671	702	716	6.7
New Brunswick	542	577	572	5.7
Quebec	4,978	5,497	5,327	7.0
Ontario	8,166	8,614	8,842	8.3
Manitoba	768	762	773	0.6
Saskatchewan	659	653	671	1.9
Alberta	2,444	2,467	2,509	2.7
British Columbia	2,856	2,847	2,872	0.6
Yukon	30	30	33	8.3
Northwest Territories	..	31	34	..
Nunavut	..	15	14	..

r *Revised figures.*
p *Preliminary figures.*
.. *Figures not available.*

■

OTHER RELEASES

Monthly Survey of Large Retailers

May and June 1999

Year-over-year sales for the group of large retailers were up 5.1% in May and 8.3% in June. In comparison, year-over-year sales for total retail trade excluding motor vehicle and recreational vehicle dealers increased 3.0% in May and 5.7% in June. For the group of large retailers, the year-over-year sales increases for health and personal care products and for hardware and lawn and garden products were strong in both months, especially in June. (Data in this release refer to sales figures that have not been seasonally adjusted.)

Health and personal care products continued to show strong year-over-year sales increases within the group of large retailers. In May, sales of these items were 13.3% higher than in May 1998. In June, they were up 15.6% compared with June 1998. In total, for the first two quarters of 1999, the group of large retailers cashed in on the sale of $2,466 million worth of health and personal care products. This was 16.2% or $345 million more than what they sold during the first two quarters of 1998. This product line accounted for 7.6% of all products sold by the group of large retailers in the first two quarters of 1999, up from 6.9% for the same period of 1998.

In May 1999, customers of the group of large retailers spent $448 million for hardware and lawn and garden supplies, an increase of $48 million or 11.9% over May 1998. In June, they bought $362 million or 22.8% (+$67 million) more than they bought in June 1998. April, May and June (especially May) are traditionally the key months for sales of lawn and garden products. For these three months of 1999, lawn and garden products alone accounted for 67% of the total hardware and lawn and garden category. For the group of large retailers, sales of lawn and garden products for April, May and June were 19.0% or $115 million higher then they were for the same period in 1998.

Sales of clothing, footwear and accessories also made a strong showing in June for the group of large retailers. Compared with June 1998, consumer purchases of these commodities were up 11.9% or $125 million at stores belonging to the group. Clothing sales fared much better at department stores and family and children's clothing stores classified as "other clothing stores" than at the more specialized men's or women's clothing stores. In April and May of this year, year-over-year increases in clothing, footwear and accessory purchases were not as high as in June. Sales of these items in April rose only 1.9% or $22 million over April 1998 and year-over-year sales for May increased 4.8% or $57 million. In general, clothing, footwear and accessories accounts for the second largest share of all products offered by the group of large retailers.

For data or general information, contact the Client Services Unit (1-877-421-3067; *retailinfo@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division. For information on the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Janet Sear (613-951-5580), Retail Commodity Section, Distributive Trades Division. □

Sales for the group of large retailers

	April 1998	April 1999r	April 1998 to April 1999	May 1998	May 1999r	May 1998 to May 1999	June 1998	June 1999p	June 1998 to June 1999
	unadjusted								
	$ 000,000		% change	$ 000,000		% change	$ 000,000		% change
Commodities									
Food and beverages	1,984	2,077	4.7	2,104	2,149	2.2	1,968	2,039	3.6
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,108	1,129	1.9	1,187	1,244	4.8	1,053	1,178	11.9
Home furnishings and electronics	608	668	9.9	646	700	8.5	689	742	7.7
Health and personal care products	358	422	18.0	385	436	13.3	365	422	15.6
Housewares	234	259	10.6	249	265	6.4	242	261	7.6
Sporting and leisure goods	248	248	-0.2	251	269	7.3	253	280	10.7
Hardware and lawn and garden products	283	285	0.5	401	448	11.9	294	362	22.8
All other goods and services	557	571	2.5	587	592	1.0	564	595	5.4
Total	**5,380**	**5,659**	**5.2**	**5,808**	**6,104**	**5.1**	**5,428**	**5,876**	**8.3**

r *Revised figures.*
p *Preliminary figures.*

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Natural gas sales

June 1999 (preliminary)

Natural gas sales totalled 3 609 million cubic metres in June, down 1.7% from June 1998. Sales increased for both the residential (+2.7%) and commercial (+3.3%) sectors. Sales to the industrial sectors (including direct sales) decreased 2.9%.

Natural gas sales

	June 1999p	June 1998	June 1998 to June 1999
	thousands of cubic metres		% change
Natural gas sales	**3,609,062**	**3,670,037**	**-1.7**
Residential	486,810	474,160	2.7
Commercial	320,880	310,668	3.3
Industrial	1,469,569	1,627,140	-2.9
Direct	1,331,803	1,258,069	
	Year-to-date		
	1999p	1998	1998 to 1999
	thousands of cubic metres		% change
Natural gas sales	**37,107,085**	**35,032,624**	**5.9**
Residential	8,960,019	8,633,358	3.8
Commercial	6,284,416	5,714,905	10.0
Industrial	10,567,141	11,102,622	5.7
Direct	11,295,509	9,581,739	

p *Preliminary figures.*

Year-to-date sales to the end of June were up 5.9% over the same period in 1998. Sales to the residential (+3.8%) and commercial (+10.0%) sectors increased largely due to the unseasonably cold weather in the first half of 1999. Sales to the industrial sector (including direct sales) maintained steady growth, posting a 5.7% increase over the same period last year.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 1052-1055.

The June 1999 issue of *Gas utilities* (55-002-XPB, $17/$165) will be available in September. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Gary Smalldridge (613-951-3567; *smalgar@statcan.ca*) or Tom Lewis (613-951-3596; *talewis@statcan.ca*), Energy Section, Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Energy supply and demand

Third quarter 1998

Production of primary energy in Canada totalled 3 784 petajoules in the third quarter of 1998, down 0.2% from the same quarter in 1997. The decline was due to decreases in the production of coal (-13.0%) and primary electricity (-1.8%). Production of crude oil, natural gas and natural gas liquids advanced from the same quarter in 1997.

In the third quarter of 1998, total exports of primary energy products rose 5.4% over the third quarter of 1997. Gains were recorded by the natural gas, natural gas liquids and electricity sectors. Imports of primary energy products increased 1.7% with virtually all products recording gains. The 6.6% increase in fuels used for electricity generation was largely due to increased use of coal in Ontario.

Energy supply and demand

	Third quarter 1997	Third quarter 1998	Third quarter 1997 to third quarter 1998
	Petajoules[2]		% change
Production[1]	**3,792**	**3,784**	**-0.2**
Exports[1]	1,874	1,975	5.4
Imports[1]	597	607	1.7
Availability[1]	2 352	2 342	-0.4
Electricity generation[1]	320	341	6.6
Producer consumption	261	257	-1.5
Non-energy use	230	249	8.3
Final Demand[3]	**1,524**	**1,520**	**-0.3**
Industrial	506	506	-
Transportation	582	595	2.2
Residential and farm	214	206	-3.7
Commercial and government	222	213	-4.1
	Year-To-Date		
	1997	1998	1997 to 1998
	Petajoules[2]		% change
Production[1]	**11,288**	**11,538**	**2.2**
Exports[1]	5,486	5,929	8.1
Imports[1]	1,601	1,741	8.7
Availability[1]	7,483	7,434	-0.7
Electricity generation[1]	880	960	9.1
Producer consumption	743	761	2.4
Non-energy use	626	635	1.4
Final demand[3]	**5,240**	**5,114**	**-2.4**
Industrial	1,634	1,608	-1.6
Transportation	1,627	1,681	3.3
Residential and farm	1,109	1,001	-9.3
Commercial and government	870	824	-5.3

1 *Primary energy sources include coal, crude oil, natural gas, natural gas liquids, and hydro and nuclear electricity.*
2 *A 30 litre gasoline fill-up contains about one gigajoule of energy. A petajoule is one million gigajoules.*
3 *Final demand represents the sum of usage by the industrial, transportation, residential and farm, and commercial and government sectors.*

Final demand for energy in Canada was 0.3% lower during the third quarter of 1998 than in the same quarter of 1997. Energy consumption edged down for the residential and farm (-3.7%) and commercial and government (-4.1%) sectors. Energy use by the industrial sector was unchanged, while the transportation sector posted a 2.2% gain.

During the first nine months of 1998, production of primary energy was 2.2% higher than for the same period in 1997. Exports of primary energy products rose 8.1% while imports (mainly crude oil and coal) increased 8.7%. Final demand for energy in Canada decreased 2.4%.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 4945, 4946, 4950-4962 and 7976-8001.

The third quarter 1998 issue of *Quarterly report on energy supply/demand in Canada* (57-003-XPB, $43/ $141), will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Gary Smalldridge (613-951-3567; *smalgar@statcan.ca*), Energy Section, Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Defining e-commerce

A new report provides background information towards the development of working definitions of electronic commerce. In addition, through selected case studies, it examines whether respondents could provide information for such measurements. The study distinguishes between e-commerce and e-business (with e-commerce being a component of e-business) and emphasizes computer mediation as an important feature of this process.

A reality check to defining e-commerce (88F0006XIB, free) is now available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca), under *Products and services* followed by *Research papers*.

For more information, contact George Sciadas (613-951-6389; fax: 613-951-9920; *george.sciadas@statcan.ca*), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division. ■

Stocks of frozen poultry meat

August 1, 1999 (preliminary)

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

Available on CANSIM: matrices 5675-5677.

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

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Infomat - A weekly review, August 20, 1999
Catalogue number 11-002-XIE
(Canada: $3/$109).

Infomat - A weekly review, August 20, 1999
Catalogue number 11-002-XPE
(Canada: $4/$145; outside Canada: US$4/US$145).

Monthly Survey of Manufacturing, June 1999
Catalogue number 31-001-XPB
(Canada: $20/$196; outside Canada: US$20/US$196).

Communications service bulletin, vol. 29, no. 2
Catalogue number 56-001-XIB
(Canada: $10/$32).

Civil justice project: the use of time limits and notification in civil case management, 1998
Catalogue number 85-547-XIE
(Free).

Civil courts study report, 1999
Catalogue number 85-549-XIE
(Canada: $32).

Focus on culture, Summer 1999, vol. 11, no. 2
Catalogue number 87-004-XPB
(Canada: $9/$27; outside Canada: US$9/US$27).

All prices exclude sales tax.

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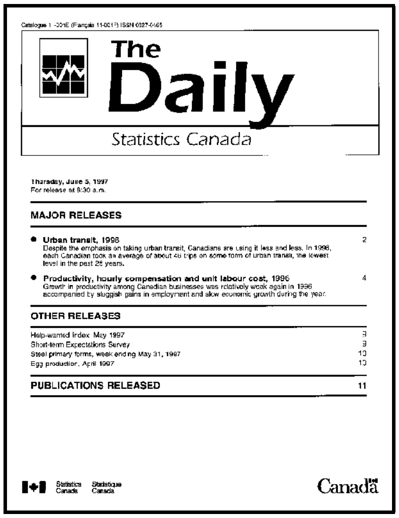
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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 45 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 relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

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RELEASE DATES: AUGUST 23 TO 27

August 23 to 27

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
23	**Canada’s international transactions in securities**	June 1999
24	**1995 graduates who moved to the United States**	March 1999
24	**Movie theatres and drive-ins**	1997-98
25	**Employment Insurance**	June 1999
25	**Livestock statistics**	July 1, 1999
25	**Tuition fees**	1999/2000
26	**Field crop reporting series: July 31 crop production estimates**	1999
26	**Farm cash receipts**	January-June 1999
26	**Employment, earnings and hours**	June 1999
27	**Industrial Product Price Index**	July 1999
27	**Raw Materials Price Index**	July 1999