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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Retail trade,** August 2000 — 2
  Retail sales paused at $23.4 billion in August, after three months of strong increases.

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Market research handbook

2000 Edition

The 2000 edition of the *Market research handbook* is now available. Since 1975, the *Market research handbook* has been an authoritative source of socio-economic information, reflecting key characteristics of local and national markets. By providing accurate and timely statistics on the changing demographics, standards of living, and economic characteristics of Canadian society, the handbook helps businesses locate target markets, track their market share, and assess their competitive position.

The 2000 edition contains the latest data from the 1996 Census and a wide range of surveys, and incorporates a number of features designed to make it more user-friendly. Features include a user's guide, annotated charts to reveal salient trends, help lines for each of the data sources, and references to CANSIM, Statistics Canada's Canadian Socio-economic Information Management System.

To order the *Market research handbook* (63-224-XPB, $125), see *How to order products.* For general information about this publication, contact Serge Bourret (613-951-0821), Small Business and Special Surveys Division.

MAJOR RELEASES

Retail trade

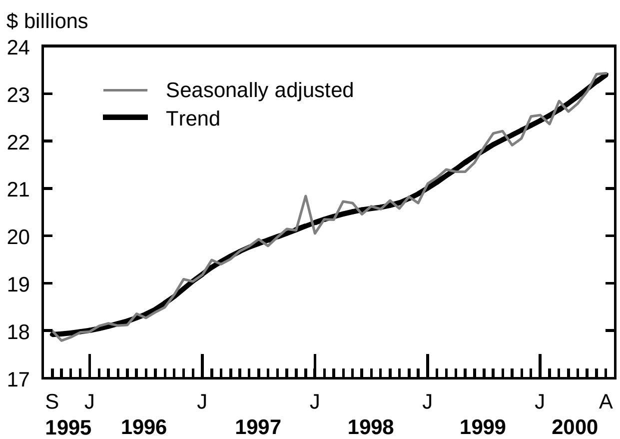
August 2000

Retail sales paused at $23.4 billion (+0.1%) in August, after three months of strong increases. The continued strength in sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers helped to offset the weakness observed in several other retail sectors. Excluding sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers, total retail sales declined 0.5% in August. Lower sales were noted in furniture stores, general merchandise stores, clothing stores and drug stores.

Despite a pause in August, the level of overall spending in retail stores was 5.7% higher than in August 1999. Furthermore, retail sales in the first eight months of 2000 were 6.4% higher than in the same period of 1999. The 1999 growth in sales compared with 1998 for the same eight-month period was 5.0%.

The gains in May, June and July followed a slow start in 2000. Prior to this year, retail sales had generally been increasing since early 1996, except for a period of smaller gains in the spring and summer of 1998.

Retail sales paused



Auto sector continues to drive retail sales

In August, retailers in the automotive sector posted their fourth consecutive monthly gain in sales (+0.8%). Within the sector, motor and recreational vehicle dealers (+1.7%) and automotive parts, accessories and services stores (+0.8%) posted sales advances, while gasoline service stations reported a 2.1% drop in sales.

Low financing rates and large cash rebates offered by manufacturers helped push up sales of motor and recreational vehicles in August for a fourth straight month. With the exception of weaker gains at the start of 2000, motor and recreational vehicle dealers have seen strong sales increases since the fall of 1998.

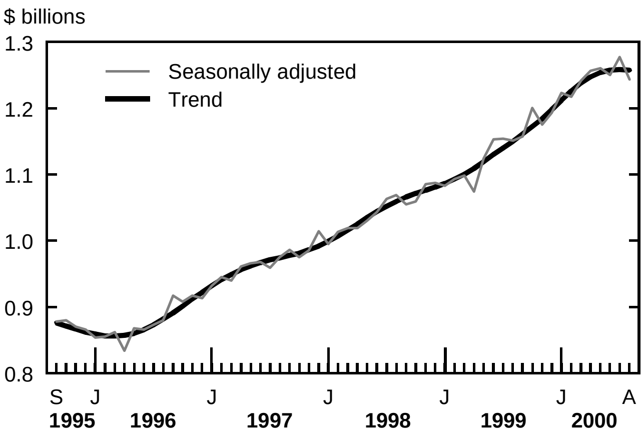
Sales by automotive parts, accessories and services stores picked up strength in the summer months, after a period of weaker increases at the beginning of 2000. Sales by these retailers have generally been increasing since the fall of 1997. The decline in sales by gasoline service stations in August reflected a drop of 3.5% in prices at the pump. Despite this decline, sales by gasoline service stations remained at historically high levels, mostly because of higher gasoline prices. Sales in August were 38% higher than in February 1999, the last month before gasoline prices started their strong upward movement.

In August, sales advances were also noted in stores classified as "other retail" (+0.6%) and in food stores (+0.3%). This was a fourth consecutive monthly gain for stores in the other retail category and a third straight monthly increase for food stores. The other retail category includes liquor stores, sporting goods stores, hardware stores and bookstores. Sales in this category have generally been rising since the summer of 1996, while sales in food stores have been rising since the spring of the same year.

Consumers reduced spending in furniture stores

A reduction in consumer spending in the furniture sector in August (-2.7%) completely offset July's 2.2% gain. Sales in furniture stores are essentially unchanged since April 2000, following a four-year period of strong increases. These weaker sales numbers noted in the furniture sector may reflect the reduction in housing starts observed since early 2000. The number of housing starts reached 169,300 units in February 2000, ending a period of strong growth that started in mid-1998. In August 2000, housing starts were 13.8% lower than February's peak.

Furniture sector slowed



Sales by general merchandise stores fell 1.7% in August, after four consecutive monthly advances. Within this sector, department stores (-3.8%) lost about three-quarters of the cumulative sales gains reported in July (+2.7%) and June (+2.4%). Despite this decline, department store sales have followed an upward movement that began early in the spring, after a period of declines that started in September 1999. Sales by other general merchandise stores advanced 1.1% in August, marking a fourth straight monthly rise. Other general merchandise stores have seen rising sales since early 1997.

Consumer spending in clothing stores fell 0.9% in August, after three months of sales increases. Sales in clothing stores have been growing since the start of 1996. About 60% of all clothing is purchased from these specialty clothing stores, while the rest is mostly purchased from general merchandise stores and sporting goods stores. Reduced sales were also reported by drug stores (-0.6%) in August, partly offsetting the 0.9% gain in July. Drug store sales have been rising slowly since the end of 1998.

Gains in New Brunswick, Newfoundland and British Columbia

New Brunswick (+1.6%), Newfoundland (+0.6%) and British Columbia (+0.5%) posted the strongest retail sales advances in August. These gains reflected mostly higher sales in the automotive sector. Retail sales have generally been increasing since the summer of 1998 in New Brunswick and Newfoundland. In British Columbia, the period of overall advances in retail sales started in the fall of 1998. All three territories also posted strong gains in August.

After reporting strong sales in June and July, retailers in Nova Scotia (-1.8%) and Quebec (-0.6%) posted the only significant declines in August. These declines were broad-based in both provinces, except for rising sales in the automotive sector in Quebec. Nova Scotia retail sales have for the most part been growing since the spring of 1997. Quebec retailers have generally been reporting sales advances since the summer of 1998.

Retailers in the remaining provinces saw little change in sales in August.

Related indicators for September

Total employment advanced 0.4% in September, adding to the 0.2% gain observed in August. These gains followed slight declines (-0.1%) in both July and June. Preliminary figures from the auto industry show a rise in the number of new motor vehicles sold in September. The number of housing starts advanced 7.1% in September, partly offsetting the 11.8% decline reported in August.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2399 and 2400 (main matrices), 2299, 2397, 2398, 2401-2416 and 2418-2420.

The August 2000 issue of *Retail trade* (63-005-XIB, $16/$155; 63-005-XPB, $21/$206) will be available soon. See *How to order products.*

Retail sales estimates for September will be released on November 22.

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

Retail sales

	Aug. 1999	May 2000r	June 2000r	July 2000r	Aug. 2000p	July to Aug. 2000	Aug. 1999 to Aug. 2000
	seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Food	**4,918**	**5,030**	**5,053**	**5,118**	**5,134**	**0.3**	**4.4**
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,553	4,656	4,677	4,737	4,745	0.2	4.2
All other food stores	365	374	376	381	389	2.3	6.7
Drug and patent medicine stores	**1,114**	**1,124**	**1,132**	**1,142**	**1,135**	**-0.6**	**1.9**
Clothing	**1,205**	**1,238**	**1,250**	**1,263**	**1,252**	**-0.9**	**4.0**
Shoe stores	133	133	133	136	133	-2.1	0.1
Men's clothing stores	133	132	133	134	133	-0.8	0.2
Women's clothing stores	379	382	383	379	383	0.9	1.0
Other clothing stores	560	591	601	614	603	-1.7	7.8
Furniture	**1,151**	**1,260**	**1,250**	**1,277**	**1,243**	**-2.7**	**8.0**
Household furniture and appliance stores	934	1,026	1,019	1,034	1,006	-2.7	7.7
Household furnishings stores	217	234	231	243	236	-2.5	9.1
Automotive	**8,831**	**9,130**	**9,286**	**9,470**	**9,550**	**0.8**	**8.1**
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	6,010	6,049	6,171	6,291	6,401	1.7	6.5
Gasoline service stations	1,569	1,779	1,832	1,854	1,814	-2.1	15.6
Automotive parts, accessories and services stores	1,252	1,303	1,284	1,325	1,335	0.8	6.7
General merchandise stores	**2,583**	**2,571**	**2,609**	**2,659**	**2,615**	**-1.7**	**1.2**
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	**2,357**	**2,436**	**2,465**	**2,483**	**2,498**	**0.6**	**6.0**
Other semi-durable goods stores	728	719	734	752	740	-1.7	1.6
Other durable goods stores	587	611	619	616	628	1.9	6.9
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	1,042	1,105	1,112	1,115	1,131	1.4	8.5
Total, retail sales	**22,157**	**22,788**	**23,045**	**23,411**	**23,428**	**0.1**	**5.7**
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	**16,148**	**16,739**	**16,874**	**17,120**	**17,027**	**-0.5**	**5.4**
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland	351	372	377	378	381	0.6	8.4
Prince Edward Island	98	103	103	105	105	-0.1	7.1
Nova Scotia	685	696	716	726	713	-1.8	4.1
New Brunswick	568	573	577	575	584	1.6	2.8
Quebec	5,098	5,173	5,252	5,399	5,366	-0.6	5.3
Ontario	8,573	8,801	8,851	8,985	9,014	0.3	5.1
Manitoba	769	780	779	798	799	0.1	3.8
Saskatchewan	659	679	685	687	688	0.1	4.5
Alberta	2,483	2,630	2,656	2,702	2,707	0.2	9.0
British Columbia	2,800	2,906	2,973	2,980	2,993	0.5	6.9
Yukon	27	29	29	28	28	0.8	2.4
Northwest Territories	32	31	31	33	33	1.0	4.6
Nunavut	14	15	15	15	15	3.7	6.1

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

Retail sales

	Aug. 1999	July 2000[r]	Aug. 2000[p]	Aug. 1999 to Aug. 2000
	unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Food	**4,857**	**5,323**	**5,281**	**8.7**
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,498	4,929	4,888	8.7
All other food stores	359	394	392	9.4
Drug and patent medicine stores	**1,090**	**1,106**	**1,129**	**3.6**
Clothing	**1,209**	**1,164**	**1,276**	**5.6**
Shoe stores	136	127	139	2.2
Men's clothing stores	109	116	113	3.3
Women's clothing stores	359	362	368	2.4
Other clothing stores	604	560	656	8.6
Furniture	**1,165**	**1,265**	**1,270**	**9.1**
Household furniture and appliance stores	943	1,020	1,022	8.5
Household furnishings stores	222	245	248	11.8
Automotive	**8,912**	**9,839**	**10,060**	**12.9**
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	5,979	6,431	6,717	12.3
Gasoline service stations	1,702	2,016	1,979	16.3
Automotive parts, accessories and services stores	1,231	1,392	1,365	10.8
General merchandise stores	**2,480**	**2,485**	**2,561**	**3.2**
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	**2,456**	**2,638**	**2,677**	**9.0**
Other semi-durable goods stores	755	786	787	4.2
Other durable goods stores	614	619	671	9.3
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	1,087	1,233	1,219	12.1
Total retail sales	**22,168**	**23,821**	**24,254**	**9.4**
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	**16,189**	**17,391**	**17,538**	**8.3**
Provinces and territories				
Newfoundland	363	393	406	11.7
Prince Edward Island	111	123	123	10.6
Nova Scotia	701	756	747	6.6
New Brunswick	584	600	622	6.6
Quebec	5,122	5,524	5,621	9.7
Ontario	8,427	9,045	9,196	9.1
Manitoba	763	795	814	6.8
Saskatchewan	662	697	714	7.9
Alberta	2,487	2,718	2,796	12.4
British Columbia	2,871	3,086	3,133	9.1
Yukon	31	33	33	4.9
Northwest Territories	31	35	34	8.9
Nunavut	15	15	16	7.2

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

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OTHER RELEASES

Hog inventories
October 1, 2000

Producers had an estimated 12.1 million hogs on their farms on October 1, down about 1% from 12.3 million on the same day in 1999.

The hog herd appears to have stabilized after reaching a record 12.5 million in October 1998. Inventories were down 0.7% during the third quarter of 2000 compared with the second quarter.

The breeding herd, which consists of sows and boars, was also down 0.4% from October 1, 1999, and down 0.4% on a quarterly basis.

Total slaughter during the third quarter of 2000 were up 4.5% over the second quarter, as some domestic processing plants resumed regular shifts. Live hog exports also rose 12.6% compared with the second quarter, in response to higher demand from some large U.S. operations that have switched from farrowing to finishing in an effort to improve their profit margins.

Average hog prices have remained strong; as of October 1, they were 31% higher than on October 1, 1999. As the demand for hogs continues to escalate and feed costs remain low, producers have renewed incentives to expand production.

Farrowings, or births, were up 3.3 % in the third quarter from the same quarter of 1999. Farrowing intentions for the fourth quarter of 2000 are up marginally over those for the third quarter.

Note: Data for this release came from the October Hog Survey, a telephone survey of 2,500 farmers who were asked to report the number of hogs they had on their farm as of October 1.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9500-9510.

Data will be available in the *Livestock statistics update* (23-603-UPE, $45/$149) in November. See *How to order products.*

For more information, or to inquire about the concepts, methods and quality of this release, contact Tony Dupuis (613-951-2511; *tony.dupuis@statcan.ca*), Gilles Beaudry (613-951-7128; *gilles.beaudry@statcan.ca*) or the Agriculture Division information line (1-800-465-1991).

Hog inventories, exports and slaughter in relation to average hog price

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	1999 to 2000
						% change
Total hog inventories ('000 head)	**11,502**	**11,836**	**12,536**	**12,261**	**12,148**	**-0.9**
International exports ('000 head)	765	740	1,057	1,065	1,176	10.4
Total slaughter ('000 head)	3,680	3,843	4,204	4,758	4,886	2.7
Average third quarter price ($/cwt)[1]	92.46	89.20	58.06	59.04	77.41	31.1

1 *Prices are weighted averages of sales throughout the quarter. Prices are for dressed hogs graded using an index 100 system; better-quality carcasses receive a higher index, thus, a higher price.*

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Crushing statistics
September 2000

Canadian oilseed processors crushed 281 090 metric tonnes of canola in September, according to the monthly survey of crushing plants. Oil production totalled 118 014 tonnes, and meal production was 173 640 tonnes.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 5687.

The September 2000 issue of *Cereals and oilseeds review* (22-007-XIB, $11/$112; 22-007-XPB, $15/$149) will be released in December. See *How to order products.*

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Sue Anderson (613-951-3859; *sue.anderson@statcan.ca*) or Karen Gray (204-983-2856; *karen.gray@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division.

■

NEW PRODUCTS

Monthly Survey of Manufacturing, August 1999
Catalogue number 31-001-XPB ($20/$196).

Construction price statistics, second quarter 2000
Catalogue number 62-007-XPB ($24/$79).

Market research handbook, 2000 edition
Catalogue number 63-224-XPB ($125).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB are electronic versions on diskette and -XCD are electronic versions on compact disc.

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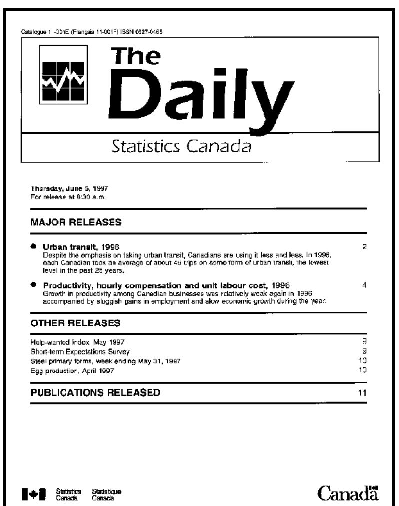
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **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 46 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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