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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

OTHER RELEASES

NEW PRODUCTS

Business data online resource

A new resource, Statistics Canada's *Business data*, devoted to guiding small and medium-sized business to valuable data and analysis, is available today. This online resource is the newest addition to *www.statcan.ca*, the official source for Canadian social and economic statistics and products, which receives more than 10,000 visitors a day.

Business data offers small businesses or anyone thinking of going into business a single-point access to free information from Statistics Canada. It provides statistics to enable start-ups to assess market characteristics and to help established firms compare themselves with their industry or analyse employment and income trends. *Business data* fills the growing needs of small businesses for free statistics, analysis and market intelligence.

This time-saving, easy-to-use business statistics resource is now online at *www.statcan.ca/english/commerce*. For more information, contact Laurie Hill, (613-951-6584; *laurie.hill@statcan.ca*), Business and Trade Statistics Field.

MAJOR RELEASES

Retail trade

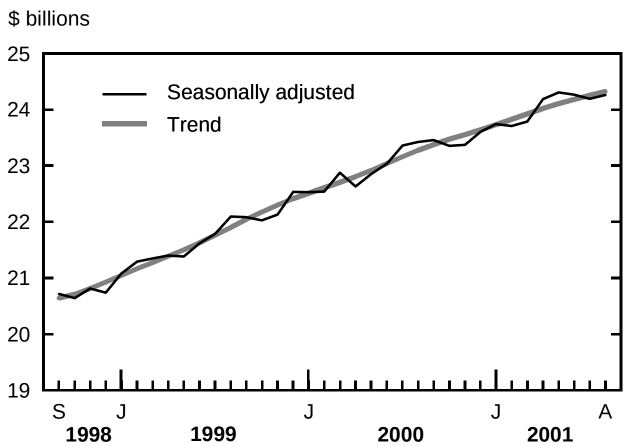
August 2001

Retailers posted a 0.3% sales increase in August, offsetting the 0.3% decline reported in July. Retail sales have held relatively steady since April, alternating between $24.2 billion and $24.3 billion. Sales by auto dealers, furniture stores and clothing stores have softened in recent months, which may indicate consumers cutting back on discretionary purchases.

Since the summer of 2000, retailers have seen two periods in which sales reached a plateau. Retail sales remained essentially flat from July to November 2000. From December 2000 to April 2001, retailers generally posted healthy sales gains—a total of 3.5% over that period. However, sales slowed down again, advancing a total of only 0.3% from April to August 2001.

Retail sales for the first eight months of 2001 were 5.0% higher than in the same period of 2000. In constant dollars, the year-to-date increase was 3.0%. In August, retail sales in constant dollars were up a slight 0.2% from July.

Retail sales relatively steady since April



Consumers cautious buying discretionary items

Auto dealers, furniture stores and clothing stores have shown little sales growth in recent months.

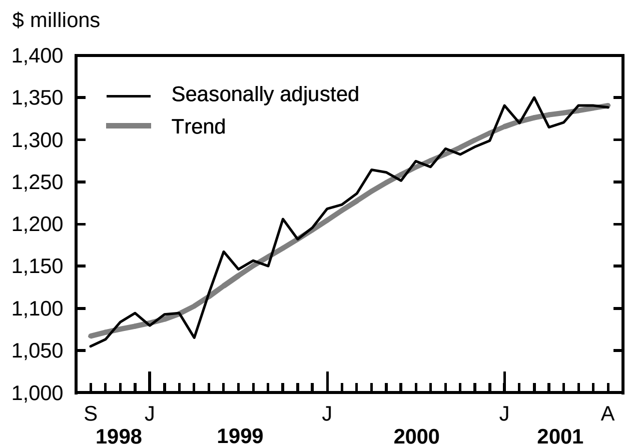
In the auto sector (+0.6%), sales by motor and recreational vehicles dealers continued to show little movement in August (-0.4%). These dealers have seen essentially flat sales of $6.4 billion each month since April. The re-introduction of various incentives contributed to April's 4.6% sales gain, and may have helped to sustain sales levels since then. The motor and recreational vehicle dealers category includes not only new car dealers, but also dealers of used cars, motor homes and motorcycles. In addition, new car dealers rely on sales of new cars for approximately 60% of their revenues; the rest comes from sales of used cars, parts and labour.

> ***Note to readers***
>
> *Estimates from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey are classified according to the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification. Retail sales estimates for September will be released on November 22.*

Sales in furniture stores fell a slight 0.2% in August, maintaining the flat sales observed in this sector since the start of 2001. Previously, sales in furniture stores advanced by at least 8.0% annually starting in 1997.

Despite the 2.1% increase in August, sales in clothing stores advanced only 0.6% in the first eight months of the year. August's increase followed three consecutive monthly declines. Widespread discounting and the opening of several new high-traffic stores were behind the strong 4.2% sales gains observed in clothing stores in April.

Sales in furniture stores have flattened out in 2001



Sales setback in the general merchandise sector

Consumers reduced spending 1.9% in the general merchandise sector in August, after two months of strong gains. Department stores were the main source for the overall sales movement observed at the sector level in June, July and August. The lower sales by department stores (-3.0%) in August followed healthy gains in July (+3.6%) and June (+1.2%). Over the first five months of 2001, department store sales changed only slightly. The opening of several new stores in November 2000 has helped sustain sales in department stores thus far in 2001. In the first eight months of this year, sales by department stores were 8.2% higher than in the same period of 2000, when sales rose only 1.7% from 1999.

Food stores (+0.6%) and drug stores (+0.7%) posted similar sales increases in August. Retailers in these two sectors have generally enjoyed strong sales increases since the first half of 2000.

The return of higher gasoline prices in August pushed up sales by gasoline service stations 3.0% over July. This follows two months in which gasoline service stations reported lower sales due to falling gasoline prices—sales dropped 8.8% in July and 3.6% in June. Despite the increase in August, sales by gasoline service stations have generally fallen in 2001 after advancing rapidly since early 1999.

Mixed signals from the provinces

Retail sales advances in August were limited to New Brunswick (+1.0%), Ontario (+0.7%), Quebec (+0.3%) and Alberta (+0.3%). However, in each case, the provincial increases follow declines seen in July or June.

Retailers in Newfoundland and British Columbia continue to enjoy strong sales despite no gains in August.

Several provinces have seen declining or flat retail sales in recent months. Sales in Ontario have stayed essentially the same since April; they lost ground in New Brunswick (-3.9%) and Quebec (-2.2%). Since May, retail sales were essentially unchanged in Alberta and Manitoba, and declined in Nova Scotia (-1.3%). Despite some fluctuations, consumers in Saskatchewan spent approximately the same amount (about $692 million) in each of the first eight months of 2001. In Prince Edward Island, retail sales started 2001 slowly but advanced rapidly in June (+2.1%). Since then, retailers in Prince Edward Island have shown no growth in sales.

Related indicators for September

Anecdotal evidence suggests that recent world events affected discretionary spending in September. Preliminary figures from the auto industry show fewer new motor vehicles sold in September than in August. The Bank Rate was lowered to 3.75% in September, the seventh decline so far in 2001.

Available on CANSIM: tables 800001-800005.

The August 2001 issue of *Retail trade* (63-005-XIB, $16/$155) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

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; *paul.gratton@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division. □

Retail sales

	August 2000	May 2001r	June 2001r	July 2001r	August 2001p	July to August 2001	August 2000 to August 2001
	Seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Food	**5,134**	**5,336**	**5,336**	**5,366**	**5,401**	**0.6**	**5.2**
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,755	4,938	4,936	4,959	4,993	0.7	5.0
All other food stores	379	397	400	408	408	0.1	7.5
Drug and patent medicine stores	**1,127**	**1,207**	**1,206**	**1,212**	**1,220**	**0.7**	**8.2**
Clothing	**1,271**	**1,328**	**1,313**	**1,296**	**1,323**	**2.1**	**4.1**
Shoe stores	145	149	145	145	146	0.7	0.6
Men's clothing stores	130	125	123	121	121	0.1	-6.8
Women's clothing stores	383	405	398	382	401	4.9	4.6
Other clothing stores	613	648	647	647	655	1.2	6.9
Furniture	**1,268**	**1,320**	**1,341**	**1,340**	**1,338**	**-0.2**	**5.6**
Household furniture and appliance stores	1,024	1,062	1,079	1,080	1,072	-0.8	4.6
Household furnishings stores	243	259	262	261	267	2.3	9.5
Automotive	**9,489**	**9,807**	**9,757**	**9,586**	**9,647**	**0.6**	**1.7**
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	6,325	6,369	6,395	6,405	6,382	-0.4	0.9
Gasoline service stations	1,839	2,057	1,983	1,808	1,863	3.0	1.3
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,325	1,381	1,379	1,372	1,402	2.2	5.8
General merchandise stores	**2,620**	**2,712**	**2,738**	**2,783**	**2,731**	**-1.9**	**4.2**
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	**2,511**	**2,596**	**2,576**	**2,609**	**2,603**	**-0.3**	**3.7**
Other semi-durable goods stores	737	754	739	754	730	-3.2	-1.0
Other durable goods stores	632	647	642	642	646	0.6	2.1
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	1,141	1,194	1,195	1,213	1,227	1.1	7.5
Total, retail sales	**23,420**	**24,306**	**24,267**	**24,192**	**24,262**	**0.3**	**3.6**
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	**17,096**	**17,937**	**17,872**	**17,787**	**17,880**	**0.5**	**4.6**
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland	383	410	416	424	423	-0.1	10.6
Prince Edward Island	104	106	108	108	108	0.0	3.8
Nova Scotia	714	736	732	734	726	-1.1	1.7
New Brunswick	584	581	585	578	583	1.0	-0.1
Quebec	5,373	5,598	5,579	5,528	5,547	0.3	3.2
Ontario	9,006	9,209	9,134	9,125	9,185	0.7	2.0
Manitoba	795	833	824	841	829	-1.4	4.4
Saskatchewan	685	698	694	693	689	-0.5	0.6
Alberta	2,686	2,898	2,908	2,899	2,909	0.3	8.3
British Columbia	3,015	3,156	3,204	3,183	3,182	0.0	5.5
Yukon	28	29	30	29	29	-0.8	1.3
Northwest Territories	33	36	36	35	36	3.1	9.0
Nunavut	15	16	17	17	16	-5.2	1.1

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

Retail sales

	August 2000	July 2001r	August 2001p	August 2000 to August 2001
	Unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Food	**5,258**	**5,405**	**5,672**	**7.9**
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,877	4,988	5,257	7.8
All other food stores	381	416	416	9.0
Drug and patent medicine stores	**1,116**	**1,177**	**1,229**	**10.1**
Clothing	**1,287**	**1,161**	**1,370**	**6.4**
Shoe stores	149	131	156	4.6
Men's clothing stores	113	104	107	-5.4
Women's clothing stores	365	355	388	6.3
Other clothing stores	660	571	719	8.9
Furniture	**1,292**	**1,335**	**1,375**	**6.4**
Household furniture and appliance stores	1,038	1,069	1,093	5.4
Household furnishings stores	254	266	281	10.7
Automotive	**10,033**	**10,155**	**10,287**	**2.5**
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	6,675	6,762	6,819	2.2
Gasoline service stations	1,999	1,950	2,018	0.9
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,360	1,443	1,450	6.7
General merchandise stores	**2,559**	**2,558**	**2,668**	**4.2**
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	**2,678**	**2,732**	**2,843**	**6.1**
Other semi-durable goods stores	780	793	779	-0.1
Other durable goods stores	673	625	698	3.7
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	1,225	1,314	1,366	11.5
Total, retail sales	**24,223**	**24,523**	**25,442**	**5.0**
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	**17,548**	**17,761**	**18,623**	**6.1**
Provinces and territories				
Newfoundland	410	445	462	12.8
Prince Edward Island	121	128	127	4.8
Nova Scotia	747	766	775	3.7
New Brunswick	626	598	634	1.3
Quebec	5,618	5,645	5,878	4.6
Ontario	9,180	9,115	9,505	3.5
Manitoba	815	838	867	6.5
Saskatchewan	715	704	725	1.5
Alberta	2,767	2,902	3,038	9.8
British Columbia	3,141	3,295	3,343	6.4
Yukon	33	34	34	2.2
Northwest Territories	33	36	37	10.4
Nunavut	16	16	16	0.4

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

■

OTHER RELEASES

Monthly Survey of Large Retailers

August 2001

Sales by the group of large retailers totalled $6.9 billion in August, up 8.5% from August 2000. Every major commodity group posted higher year-over-year sales. The largest gains were seen in the health and personal care products and all other goods and services categories. (All data in this release are unadjusted for seasonality and all percentages represent year-over-year changes.)

Sales by commodity for the group of large retailers

	July 2001[r]	Aug. 2000[r]	Aug. 2001[p]	Aug. 2000 to Aug. 2001
	Unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Commodities				
Food and beverages	2,121	2,124	2,244	5.6
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,100	1,245	1,340	7.7
Home furnishings and electronics	952	908	991	9.2
Health and personal care products	521	489	562	14.9
Housewares	308	308	336	9.0
Sporting and leisure goods	326	287	309	7.7
Hardware and lawn and garden products	304	229	252	10.2
All other goods and services	771	728	818	12.4
Total	**6,403**	**6,316**	**6,852**	**8.5**

[r] *Revised figures.*
[p] *Preliminary figures.*

The group of large retailers has slowly broadened its product selection to include more non-traditional items. For example, department and grocery stores have expanded into pharmaceutical sales, an area traditionally associated with drug stores, and some stores have expanded their product line to include gasoline.

This move into health and personal care products helps explain the strong overall sales growth by the group in August (+14.9%). Drug sales (which include prescription and over-the-counter drugs as well as vitamins and herbal remedies) were up 16.7%. In addition, sales of personal care products were up strongly.

The all other goods and services category also posted a strong gain (+12.4%) compared with August 2000. Some of the leaders in this commodity group included: sales of meals and lunches; automotive fuels, oils and additives; and pet food and accessories.

Clothing, footwear and accessories did well in August after flat year-over-year sales in July. Girls' clothing (+13.4%) and women's clothing sales (+9.6%) performed strongly compared with August 2000. In contrast, men's and boy's clothing sales were up moderately (+2.5% and +4.0% respectively). Footwear sales also fared well in August, especially sales of athletic footwear (+18.4%).

Home furnishings and electronics sales posted a 9.2% increase over August 2000. Of the four commodity sub-groups, household appliances had the strongest sales growth. Despite having only one-fifth of the total sales, household appliances accounted for more than one-third of the total increase in the home furnishings and electronics commodity group.

Note: The Monthly Survey of Large Retailers provides a breakdown of sales on the basis of commodities at the national level for a group of about 80 large retailers. Sales data for more than 100 commodities are available on a monthly basis. The survey includes large retailers mainly in the food, clothing, home furnishings, electronics, sporting goods, and general merchandise sectors. These retailers represent about 37% of total annual retail sales, excluding recreational and motor vehicle dealers.

Available on CANSIM: table 800009.

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 Elton Cryderman (613-951-0669; *elton.cryderman@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division. ■

Natural gas sales

August 2001 (preliminary)

Natural gas sales totalled 3 730 million cubic metres in August, down 9.4% from August 2000. Lower sales were posted in all three sectors (residential, commercial and industrial). Sales to the industrial sector (including direct sales) fell 7.1% compared with August 2000, owing to lower demand for natural gas by electric utilities and the chemical industry.

Year-to-date sales dropped 6.1% from the same period in 2000. Lower demand by the industrial sector (including direct sales) led to a 6.6% decline compared with the same period of 2000. Sales to both residential and commercial dropped 6.0% and 4.0%, respectively.

Natural gas sales

	Aug. 2001p	Aug. 2000	Aug. 2000 to Aug. 2001
	thousands of cubic metres		% change
Natural gas sales	**3,729,658**	**4,117,659**	**-9.4**
Residential	329,007	399,864	-17.7
Commercial	245,482	320,148	-23.3
Industrial	1,303,557	1,784,685	-7.1
Direct	1,851,612	1,612,962	
	Year-to-date		
	2001p	2000	2000 to 2001
	thousands of cubic metres		% change
Natural gas sales	**44,563,702**	**47,435,413**	**-6.1**
Residential	9,276,676	9,866,161	-6.0
Commercial	6,664,394	6,938,682	-4.0
Industrial	12,511,705	14,472,537	-6.6
Direct	16,110,927	16,158,033	

p *Preliminary figures.*

Available on CANSIM: tables 1290001-1290004.

The August 2001 issue of *Natural gas transportation and distribution* (55-002-XIB, $13 / $125) will be available in November. See *How to order products*.

To order data, or for general information, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613- 951-9497; *energ@statcan.ca*). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact John Svab (613-951-7382; *john.svab@statcan.ca*) or Tom Lewis (613-951-3596; *tom.lewis@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Hog inventories

Third quarter 2001

Canadian hog inventories declined marginally during the third quarter, due almost entirely to a substantial drop in numbers on Ontario farms.

Hog producers reported 12.2 million head on their farms as of October 1, down 0.3% from October 1, 2000 and down 1.3% compared with the second quarter of 2001.

While stocks in Western Canada expanded 4.4% compared with 2000, they shrank 3.5% in the east and 8.3% in Ontario alone. Inventories in the east were drawn down, partly as a result of rising demand from the United States.

The American market for pork and live hogs plays an increasingly important role in the Canadian hog industry. So far in 2001, a record 3.8 million hogs have been shipped south of the border, driven by rising sales of small hogs, those weighing less than 50 kilograms.

On a year-to-date basis, exports of all hogs during the first nine months of 2001 were 19% higher than in the same period in 2000. Some 81% of hog exports originate in Manitoba or Ontario.

Despite the falling inventories at the national level and buoyed by strong prices, hog inventories remain relatively high and, in fact, reached a record level in Saskatchewan.

About 5.1 million hogs were slaughtered in the third quarter, up 5.3% from the third quarter of 2000. During the first nine months of 2001, slaughter reached a record 15.3 million hogs, up 5.2% from the same period in 2000.

Farrowings—sows giving birth—were up 5.6% in the third quarter compared with the third quarter of 2000. Farrowing intentions for the fourth quarter of 2001 are expected to rise 1.1%.

The number of hog operations has been falling over time, while the average number of pigs per farm has been rising. As of October 1, there were 12,075 hog producers, compared with 29,030 in 1991. Each farm had an average of 1,008 pigs as of October 1, 2001, about 2.8 times the 1991 average.

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

Available on CANSIM: table 30004.

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

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and quality of these data, contact Robert Plourde (613-951-8716, *robert.plourde@statcan.ca*) or Yukman Cheung (613-951-7128, *yukman.cheung@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division, or the Agriculture Division information line (1-800-465-1991). □

Hog inventories
October 1, 2000

	Breeding		Market hogs				Total hogs	
	2001	2000 to 2001	2001	2000 to 2001	2001	2000 to 2001	2001	2000 to 2001
			Under 20 kg		20 kg and over			
	’000 head	% change	’000 head	% change	’000 head	% change	’000 head	% change
Canada	**1,389**	**4,0**	**3,670**	**0,2**	**7,109**	**-1,4**	**12,168**	**-0,3**
Atlantic	37	0,0	123	0,9	231	0,4	392	0,5
Quebec	369	-0,7	1,221	2,6	2,180	-0,7	3,770	0,4
Ontario	357	5,4	857	-11,6	1,768	-9,1	2,981	-8,3
East	**763**	**2,1**	**2,201**	**-3,5**	**4,179**	**-4,4**	**7,143**	**-3,5**
Manitoba	293	7,8	652	13,8	1 057	4,4	2 003	7,8
Saskatchewan	114	10,2	264	6,0	717	5,9	1 095	6,3
Alberta	201	3,7	506	-1,4	1 071	0,0	1 778	0,0
British Columbia	18	-7,3	47	-0,8	85	7,9	150	3,0
West	**625**	**6,4**	**1,470**	**6,2**	**2,931**	**3,2**	**5,025**	**4,4**

Note: *Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.*

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Wool disposition and farm value
2000 (preliminary)

The quantity, price and farm value of purchased wool and wool for home use are now available for 2000 by province and for Canada.

Both the quantity of wool purchased and the price paid increased in 2000, pushing up the total Canadian farm value to $796,000, a 39% increase over 1999.

Available on CANSIM: table 30016.

The 2000 wool statistics will be available soon in the November 2001 issue of *Livestock statistics updates* (23-603-UPE, $45/$149). See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Bernadette Alain (902-893-7251; *bernadette.alain@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Wholesale trade, August 2001
Catalogue number 63-008-XIB ($14/$140).

Imports by commodity, Vol. 58, no. 8, August 2001
Catalogue number 65-007-XMB ($37/$361).

Imports by commodity, Vol. 58, no. 8, August 2001
Catalogue number 65-007-XPB ($78/$773).

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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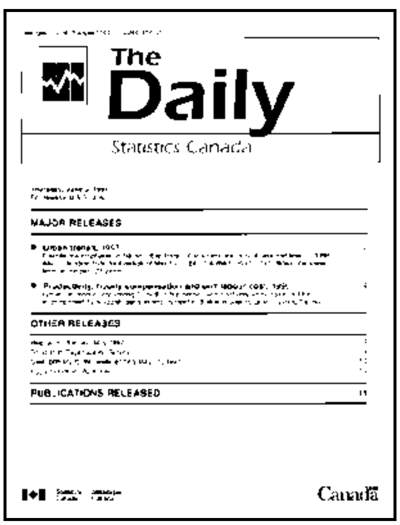
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