



The Daily

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MAJOR RELEASES

Wholesale trade

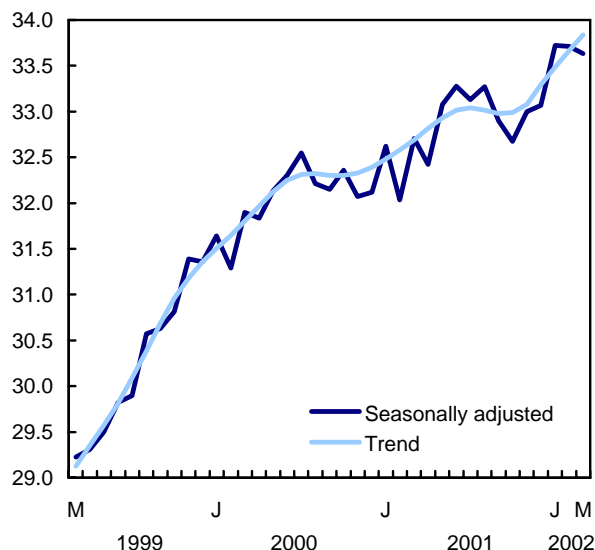
March 2002

Essentially flat wholesale sales in March (-0.2%) masks a strong quarter (+2.4%). Wholesalers sold \$33.6 billion worth of goods and services — essentially unchanged from the previous month and just down slightly from the recent peak in January. This represented the second consecutive month of flat sales. Wholesalers with direct ties to consumer goods, with the exception of food products (-3.2%), had sustained sales growth in March. On the other hand, wholesalers with close ties to industry continued to struggle, dampening overall wholesale trade this month.

However, as a result of the healthy sales increase in January, and the steady sales reported in both February and March, overall wholesale sales grew 2.4% in the first quarter of 2002. This followed the 0.6% contraction during the last quarter of 2001. Discounting the levelling out of sales in mid-2000 and mid-2001, wholesale sales have been climbing since mid-1998.

Wholesale sales continue to generally rise

\$ billions



Note to reader

Estimates from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey are classified according to the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

Wholesale trade estimates for April will be released June 19.

Sustained sales growth for wholesalers with direct ties to consumer goods

Wholesalers of apparel (+1.7%), lumber and building materials (+1.7%), household goods (+1.3%), and automotive products (+0.9%) reported strong sales in March. Aided by healthy consumer confidence, a strong housing market spurred on by low interest rates and the continuation of motor vehicle incentives, wholesalers with close ties to consumer goods continued to see healthy sales.

For household goods, it represented the sixth consecutive monthly increase. Sales in this sector have climbed 12.5% since last September when they fell 1.8%. First quarter growth was the second highest (+6.6%) amongst all wholesalers. Prior to the string of increases that started last fall, wholesale sales of household goods at the beginning of 2001 were generally lackluster, and were falling by the spring and summer of that year. Sales were also sluggish in 2000, although sales began to advance late summer and early fall before levelling out once again in 2001.

Wholesaling of automotive products remain strong

Automotive wholesalers reported their third consecutive monthly increase (+0.9%), and the highest first quarter growth (+8.2%) amongst all wholesalers. Sales were generally falling during the latter half of 2000, but turned around by the start of 2001. The general sales rise at the start of 2001 levelled off in the summer and early fall. However, the wholesaling of automotive products has taken off since then with the introduction of low interest rates and manufacturers' incentive programs.

Food products noticeably weak

Unlike their colleagues with ties to consumer goods, wholesalers of food products reported lower sales in March (-3.2%). Despite the drop this month, wholesale sales in this sector have been climbing for the last several years.

Wholesaling of industrial and farm machinery still lagging

Any sign of recovery for wholesale sales of heavy machinery faded in March as both industrial machinery (-2.2%) and farm machinery (-2.9%) fell. The drops this month completely wiped out the gains made by the two sectors in February.

Wholesale sales of industrial machinery have fallen back 6.7% from one year ago. Wholesalers in this sector have experienced four consecutive quarterly declines. First quarter 2002 sales were down 0.8%. Sales had been generally on the rise since early 1999, but started to fall at the start of 2001.

The drop in farm machinery wholesale sales in March represented the second monthly drop in the last three, and contributed to their second consecutive quarterly drop (-4.0%). After falling early in 1999, wholesale sales of farm machinery levelled out until the start of 2001 when sales started to rise. The rise was short lived however, and by the spring of that year, sales once again slowed.

Monthly sales weak in most provinces

Wholesale sales rose in only three provinces, but the rise in two of the three was relatively weak. Wholesale sales in New Brunswick rose 0.9% on the strength of computer and electronic sales, and industrial machinery, one of the bright spots for this wholesale sector. Despite the rise in March, wholesale sales in New Brunswick have been falling since mid-2001 after having climbed during the first half of the year.

Wholesale sales rose slightly in both Ontario (+0.3%) and Saskatchewan (+0.2%). The strong wholesale sales tied to household consumption contributed to Ontario's modest increase. Ontario wholesalers have seen an increase in their sales since the end of 2001, primarily on the strength of the automotive sector. Prior to this, wholesale sales were generally flat since early 2000.

Wholesalers maintained their inventories

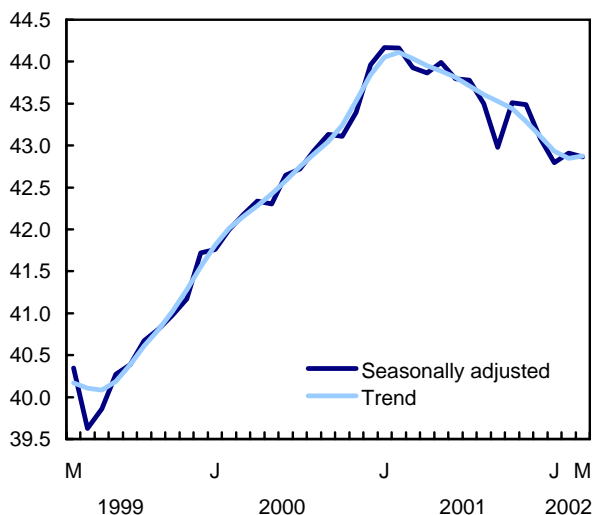
Wholesale inventories remained essentially unchanged at \$42.9 billion in March. This was

the second consecutive month of essentially stable inventory levels. After generally rising since early 1999, wholesale inventories have dropped since the start of 2001.

The inventory-to-sales ratio also remained unchanged at 1.27 in March. The ratio remains at its lowest level by recent standards.

Wholesale inventories essentially unchanged in March

\$ billions



Available on CANSIM: tables 081-0001 and 081-0002.

The March 2002 issue of *Wholesale trade* (63-008-XIB, \$14/\$140) will be available shortly. See *How to order products*.

For data or general information, contact the Client Services Unit at (1-877-421-3067 or 613-951-3549; wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca) or to enquire about concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Alexander Hays (613-951-3552; haysale@statcan.ca), Wholesale Trade Section, Distributive Trades Division. □

Wholesale merchants' sales and inventories

	March 2001	December 2001 ^r	January 2002 ^r	February 2002 ^r	March 2002 ^p	February to March 2002	March 2001 to March 2002
Seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions					% change	
Sales, all trade groups	32,705	33,067	33,724	33,714	33,635	-0.2	2.8
Food products	5,168	5,467	5,497	5,466	5,290	-3.2	2.4
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	2,651	2,966	2,901	2,923	2,924	0.0	10.3
Apparel and dry goods	546	629	585	592	601	1.7	10.1
Household goods	891	899	903	938	950	1.3	6.7
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	5,943	5,841	6,370	6,494	6,554	0.9	10.3
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	2,028	1,899	1,942	1,975	1,957	-0.9	-3.5
Lumber and building materials	2,324	2,480	2,666	2,546	2,589	1.7	11.4
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	640	739	662	678	658	-2.9	2.8
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	5,184	4,964	4,917	4,944	4,837	-2.2	-6.7
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	2,857	2,591	2,646	2,673	2,681	0.3	-6.1
Other products	4,474	4,592	4,637	4,486	4,591	2.3	2.6
Sales by province and territory							
Newfoundland and Labrador	222	211	209	209	209	-0.1	-5.9
Prince Edward Island	49	54	56	55	55	-0.7	11.5
Nova Scotia	559	595	592	589	587	-0.4	4.9
New Brunswick	436	450	438	423	427	0.9	-2.0
Quebec	6,593	6,777	6,849	6,995	6,960	-0.5	5.6
Ontario	16,360	16,182	16,786	16,767	16,811	0.3	2.8
Manitoba	952	1,040	1,045	1,002	981	-2.1	3.0
Saskatchewan	1,011	1,105	1,025	995	997	0.2	-1.4
Alberta	3,384	3,585	3,496	3,440	3,410	-0.9	0.8
British Columbia	3,111	3,036	3,199	3,195	3,172	-0.7	2.0
Yukon	9	9	9	9	8	-10.5	-1.3
Northwest Territories	16	20	18	32	17	-48.5	2.9
Nunavut	2	2	2	2	2	11.3	-12.1
Inventories, all trade groups	43,926	43,080	42,793	42,910	42,863	-0.1	-2.4
Food products	3,115	3,246	3,286	3,230	3,229	0.0	3.6
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	2,695	3,316	3,073	3,175	3,256	2.5	20.8
Apparel and dry goods	1,159	1,207	1,230	1,220	1,213	-0.6	4.6
Household goods	1,659	1,461	1,425	1,553	1,590	2.4	-4.1
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6,611	6,207	6,189	6,146	6,162	0.3	-6.8
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	3,817	3,560	3,512	3,574	3,557	-0.5	-6.8
Lumber and building materials	4,044	4,007	3,999	4,057	4,084	0.7	1.0
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	1,855	1,791	1,797	1,813	1,855	2.3	0.0
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	11,088	10,765	10,715	10,532	10,397	-1.3	-6.2
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	2,252	1,871	1,868	1,900	1,897	-0.1	-15.7
Other products	5,631	5,648	5,699	5,711	5,622	-1.6	-0.2

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.



OTHER RELEASES

Refined petroleum products

March 2002 (preliminary)

Data on the production, inventories and domestic sales of refined petroleum products are now available for March. Other selected data about these products are also available.

To order data, or for general information, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; energ@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Gerry Desjardins (613-951-4368; desjger@statcan.ca), or Eleonore Harding (613-951-5708; hardele@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Supply and disposition of crude oil and natural gas,
December 2001, Vol. 53, no. 12
Catalogue number 26-006-XPB (\$19/\$186).

Monthly Survey of Manufacturing, March 2002,
Vol. 56, no. 3
Catalogue number 31-001-XIB (\$19/\$186).

Refined petroleum products, December 2001,
Vol. 56, no. 12
Catalogue number 45-004-XPB (\$21/\$206).

Refined petroleum products, December 2001,
Vol. 56, no. 12
Catalogue number 45-004-XIB (\$16/\$155).

Consumer Price Index, April 2002, Vol. 83, no. 4
Catalogue number 62-001-XIB (\$8/\$77).
Available at 7:00 a.m. on May 22, 2002

Consumer Price Index, April 2002, Vol. 83, no. 4
Catalogue number 62-001-XPB (\$11/\$103).
Available at 7:00 a.m. on May 22, 2002

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 -XCB are electronic versions on compact disc.

How to order products

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To fax your order:

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
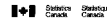

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Thursday, June 3, 1997 For release at 9:30 a.m.	
MAJOR RELEASES	
• Urban transit, 1996 Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 2.1 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.	2
• Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996 Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was modestly weak again in 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.	4
OTHER RELEASES	
• Help-wanted index, May 1997	3
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