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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Friday, November 19, 2004
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MAJOR RELEASES

OTHER RELEASES

(continued on page 2)

Release dates

2005

A list of publication dates for 2005 is available today for 29 key economic indicators, ranging from monthly data series such as the Labour Force Survey to quarterly series such as the balance of international payments.

The dates in this calendar are cross-indexed by release title in alphabetical order and by the month of release.

This calendar is not an inclusive list of all Statistics Canada releases. For a more complete listing, consult each Friday's issue of *The Daily* for releases to be published the following week. In addition, *The Daily* issue of the last working day of the month contains a list of upcoming releases for the following month.

Release dates 2005 is now available free on the *Daily* page of our Web site in PDF format. The HTML version will be available shortly.

For more information, contact Gilbert Côté (613-951-1088; *gilbert.cote@statcan.ca*), Communications Division.

MAJOR RELEASES

Wholesale trade

September 2004

Wholesale sales declined 1.9% in September to $37.6 billion, the first decrease in seven months. Excluding the automotive sector, total sales declined 1.3%.

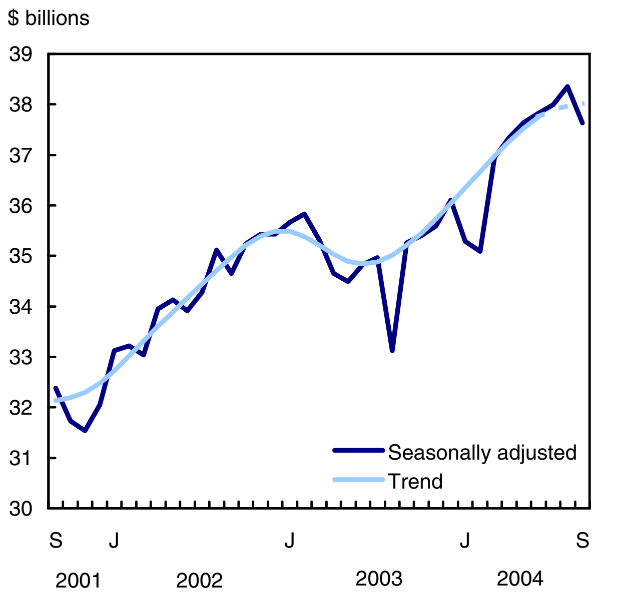
Despite this sizable drop, sales rose 1.0% in the third quarter compared with the second quarter. This gain follows a 5.1% increase in the second quarter. Moreover, cumulative sales for the first nine months of the year were up 6.3% compared with 2003.

Since September 2003, total wholesale sales have generally been rising. Previously, sales went through a period of decline starting in March 2003.

In September, sales slumped in five of the seven sectors. Among them were the "other products" category (-7.5%), which includes chemical products and other agricultural supplies; automotive products (-4.3%); and building materials (-0.9%). Increases were observed in two sectors: farm products (+6.1%) and personal and household goods (+1.1%).

In constant dollars, wholesale sales slipped 0.9% in September, whereas for the first nine months of the year, they rose 7.2% compared with 2003.

Wholesale sales decline in September



Automotive sector continues to suffer from weak Canadian consumer demand

Wholesale sales of motor vehicles dropped 4.3%. Sales were also down by 3.7% for the quarter, partly owing to weak sales by Canadian auto dealers in recent months. Previously, sales went through a growth period that began in September 2003.

Drop in housing starts affects the building materials sector

Wholesalers of lumber and millwork reported a 3.2% drop in sales, due in part to a decrease in housing starts in both Canada and the United States in September. Rainy weather and the continuing threat of hurricanes in the United States slowed new housing starts. Despite two consecutive monthly declines, quarterly wholesale sales advanced for a fifth straight quarter with a gain of 4.2%. Historically low mortgage rates in both Canada and the United States boosted housing construction.

Wholesalers of metal products saw their sales fall 1.5%. However, this decrease masks a solid third-quarter performance. Quarterly sales rose 12.0%, on the heels of another quite respectable increase of 9.6% in the second quarter. These strong gains are explained in part by the high prices of some products. The increase in prices is mainly due to robust demand for these products in China, which now accounts for more than 20% of global demand for metal products.

Another factor that could explain the lower sales of several wholesalers, namely "other products," metal products and lumber and millwork, is the stronger Canadian dollar. In September, the Canadian dollar appreciated approximately 2% against the US dollar. These groups obtain a sizable share of their sales from exports, and many of their products are denominated in US dollars.

Sales rebound in the personal and household goods sector

Following a 1.8% drop in August, sales in the personal and household goods sector rose 1.1% in September. This gain was propelled by apparel sales (+3.7%), which registered their first rise in four months. Sales of pharmaceuticals also rose (+0.7%). Sales in the personal and household goods sector reached an all-time high last April, capping a growth spurt that began in February 2003. In the last few months, however, sales of this group have begun to show signs of weakness.

Newfoundland and Labrador and Ontario post the steepest declines

Wholesalers in Newfoundland and Labrador registered a third consecutive decline in sales, falling 6.0% in September. Contractions were observed in numerous trade groups, including food products and the "other products" group. Quarterly sales declined 9.5%, following a 5.2% increase in the second quarter. The groups that contributed the most to the weakness in quarterly sales were food products, machinery and equipment, and computers and electronic equipment.

Sales of Ontario wholesalers also contracted in September (-3.4%). The drop is attributable to the automotive group and computers and electronic products. These two groups account for more than a third of the sales in this province. For the quarter, sales were down marginally (-0.2%). Wholesale sales in Ontario have generally been rising since September 2003 following a period of stability that began in February 2003.

Inventory ratio up substantially

An increase in inventories, combined with the decrease in sales, caused a rise in the inventory-to-sales ratio, which stood at 1.19 in September compared with 1.16 in August. Since September 2003, the ratio has followed a slight downward trend after a period of increases that began in December 2002.

Inventories rose in September (+0.9%). An increase in inventories of motor vehicles and "other products" accounted for much of this gain. The value of inventories in these two sectors represents approximately 22% of total inventories of wholesalers. The trend in overall inventories has generally been upward since November 2003, following a five-month period when wholesalers reduced their inventories.

Available on CANSIM: tables 081-0007 to 081-0010.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2401.

The September 2004 issue of *Wholesale Trade* (63-008-XIE, $15/$150) will soon be available.

Wholesale trade estimates for October 2004 will be released on December 20.

For data or general information, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; *wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jean Lebreux (613-951-4907; *jean.lebreux@statcan.ca*), Distributive Trades Division.

□

Wholesale merchants' sales

	September 2003	June 2004r	July 2004r	August 2004r	September 2004r	August 2004 to September 2004	September 2003 to September 2004
	seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Total, wholesale sales	**35,264**	**37,826**	**37,997**	**38,355**	**37,632**	**-1.9**	**6.7**
Farm products	**385**	**395**	**402**	**456**	**484**	**6.1**	**25.6**
Food, beverages and tobacco products	**7,028**	**7,159**	**7,377**	**7,218**	**7,168**	**-0.7**	**2.0**
Food products	6,420	6,498	6,693	6,562	6,496	-1.0	1.2
Alcohol and tobacco	608	661	684	656	672	2.5	10.6
Personal and household goods	**4,927**	**5,152**	**5,195**	**5,100**	**5,157**	**1.1**	**4.7**
Apparel	757	728	691	682	707	3.7	-6.6
Household and personal products	2,159	2,305	2,368	2,322	2,339	0.7	8.3
Pharmaceuticals	2,011	2,119	2,136	2,095	2,110	0.7	4.9
Automotive products	**7,283**	**7,946**	**7,640**	**7,706**	**7,379**	**-4.3**	**1.3**
Motor vehicles	5,862	6,416	6,127	6,160	5,894	-4.3	0.6
Motor vehicle parts and accessories	1,421	1,529	1,512	1,547	1,484	-4.0	4.4
Building materials	**4,474**	**5,090**	**5,217**	**5,238**	**5,193**	**-0.9**	**16.1**
Building supplies	2,754	2,902	2,919	2,896	2,906	0.4	5.5
Metal products	799	1,073	1,118	1,208	1,190	-1.5	48.9
Lumber and millwork	921	1,115	1,180	1,133	1,097	-3.2	19.1
Machinery and electronic equipment	**7,087**	**7,630**	**7,730**	**8,049**	**8,009**	**-0.5**	**13.0**
Machinery and equipment	2,991	3,303	3,356	3,390	3,551	4.8	18.7
Computer and other electronic equipment	2,487	2,628	2,694	2,897	2,655	-8.4	6.7
Office and professional equipment	1,609	1,700	1,680	1,763	1,803	2.3	12.1
Other products	**4,078**	**4,454**	**4,436**	**4,588**	**4,242**	**-7.5**	**4.0**
Sales, province and territory							
Newfoundland and Labrador	211	224	208	201	189	-6.0	-10.6
Prince Edward Island	48	53	50	50	52	4.4	7.2
Nova Scotia	538	498	505	514	506	-1.7	-6.0
New Brunswick	443	444	430	444	447	0.8	1.1
Quebec	6,885	7,233	7,472	7,326	7,364	0.5	7.0
Ontario	18,547	19,860	19,799	20,049	19,363	-3.4	4.4
Manitoba	867	1,015	933	988	973	-1.6	12.2
Saskatchewan	940	1,010	986	1,017	1,054	3.7	12.1
Alberta	3,453	3,838	3,835	3,963	3,934	-0.7	14.0
British Columbia	3,307	3,630	3,760	3,779	3,723	-1.5	12.6
Yukon	8	7	7	7	7	4.0	-13.1
Northwest Territories	15	12	12	16	15	-4.3	-3.7
Nunavut	1	1	1	2	4	125.5	160.4

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

Wholesale merchants' inventories and inventory-to-sales ratio

	September 2003	June 2004[r]	July 2004[r]	August 2004[r]	September 2004[r]	August 2004 to September 2004	September 2003 to September 2004	August 2004[r]	September 2004[p]
	Wholesale inventories							Inventory-to-sales ratio	
	seasonally adjusted								
	$ millions					% change			
Inventories	**43,545**	**44,490**	**44,624**	**44,546**	**44,957**	**0.9**	**3.2**	**1.16**	**1.19**
Farm products	96	166	153	157	169	7.5	75.1	0.34	0.35
Food products	4,827	4,339	4,376	4,390	4,300	-2.0	-10.9	0.67	0.66
Alcohol and tobacco	281	292	288	292	313	7.0	11.4	0.45	0.47
Apparel	1,439	1,410	1,431	1,431	1,434	0.2	-0.3	2.10	2.03
Household and personal products	3,202	3,543	3,438	3,345	3,279	-2.0	2.4	1.44	1.40
Pharmaceuticals	2,331	2,565	2,583	2,629	2,624	-0.2	12.5	1.26	1.24
Motor vehicles	3,979	4,096	3,997	3,852	4,118	6.9	3.5	0.63	0.70
Motor vehicle parts and accessories	3,454	2,937	3,307	3,202	3,056	-4.5	-11.5	2.07	2.06
Building supplies	4,433	4,491	4,348	4,283	4,318	0.8	-2.6	1.48	1.49
Metal products	1,407	2,019	2,110	2,086	2,183	4.6	55.1	1.73	1.83
Lumber and millwork	810	1,092	1,134	1,125	1,140	1.3	40.7	0.99	1.04
Machinery and equipment	8,201	8,446	8,313	8,366	8,522	1.9	3.9	2.47	2.40
Computer and other electronic equipment	1,580	1,461	1,424	1,375	1,393	1.3	-11.8	0.47	0.52
Office and professional equipment	2,312	2,418	2,551	2,506	2,424	-3.2	4.8	1.42	1.34
Other products	5,193	5,216	5,173	5,507	5,684	3.2	9.5	1.20	1.34

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

■

OTHER RELEASES

Monthly Survey of Large Retailers

September 2004

Sales jumped by 1.9% in September after slipping in August, moving 0.4% above the previous high recorded in July. Third quarter sales were up 1.6% over the second quarter, an annualized growth rate of 6.5%. Despite large fluctuations in recent months, sales at large retailers have generally been increasing throughout 2004, after strongly rebounding from a weak December. In 2003, sales growth was steady between April and November, after having been more volatile in late 2002 and early 2003.

Six of eight major commodity groups posted gains for the group of large retailers in September. The sharpest increase was in sporting and leisure goods, while housewares and other goods and services posted minimal declines. The remaining major commodity groups mostly reversed August's losses, with the exception of home furnishings and electronics which posted a third consecutive month of strong growth.

Sporting and leisure good sales, possibly hurt by unseasonable weather in August, rebounded in September (+8.3%), reversing the large decline of the previous month. Despite the significant gain in September, sales were up only 1.6% from January. Before levelling off in 2004, sales grew steadily throughout 2003 following a slowing down at the end of 2002.

Pre-recorded CDs, DVDs, and video tapes (+16.5%) were the largest mover among the sporting and leisure good commodities. This commodity group is influenced by the timing of blockbuster releases to video format, which likely had an impact on September sales. In addition, sales of sporting goods were up a sharp 10.3% in September. However, this did not return sporting good sales to previously recorded highs due to an 11.4% drop in August.

Continuing a strong year, home furnishing and electronic sales posted another solid month of gains. Sales at large retailers were up 2.8% on the back of robust gains for household appliances (+5.7%) and home electronics (+3.4%). Home furnishings (such as flooring, draperies, bedding and artwork) increased 1.1%, while furniture sales increased minimally.

Home furnishing and electronic sales provided the spark for third quarter gains at large retailers, accounting for just under one-third of the 1.6% increase compared with the second quarter. After holding steady throughout most of 2002, sales of home furnishings and electronics increased gradually in 2003 before accelerating rapidly in 2004.

Sales by commodity for the group of large retailers

	Sept. 2003	Aug. 2004[r]	Sept. 2004[p]	Aug. to Sept. 2004	Sept. 2003 to Sept. 2004
	seasonally adjusted				
	$ millions			% change	
Commodity					
Food and beverages	2,365	2,484	2,522	1.5	6.6
Health and personal care products	714	759	775	2.1	8.6
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,315	1,339	1,363	1.8	3.7
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics	1,079	1,191	1,224	2.8	13.5
Housewares	339	345	345	-0.1	1.8
Hardware, lawn and garden products	292	307	313	1.8	7.0
Sporting and leisure goods	394	392	424	8.3	7.8
All other goods and services	847	874	870	-0.4	2.8
Total	**7,344**	**7,691**	**7,836**	**1.9**	**6.7**

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

Sales by commodity for the group of large retailers

	Aug. 2004[r]	Sept. 2003	Sept. 2004[p]	Sept. 2003 to Sept. 2004
	unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Commodity				
Food and beverages	2,364	2,217	2,466	11.2
Health and personal care products	726	680	749	10.1
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,332	1,282	1,376	7.3
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics	1,174	1,030	1,154	12.1
Housewares	363	331	345	4.4
Hardware, lawn and garden products	278	226	247	9.3
Sporting and leisure goods	343	293	325	11.2
All other goods and services	923	821	857	4.4
Total	**7,502**	**6,878**	**7,519**	**9.3**

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

Note: This survey includes large retailers mainly in the food, clothing, home furnishings, electronics, sporting goods, and general merchandise sectors. These retailers represent approximately 26% of total annual retail sales, or 35% excluding recreational and motor vehicle dealers.

All data in this release are adjusted for seasonality and all percentages are month-to-month changes unless otherwise indicated. Results from the Monthly Survey of Large Retailers are classified according to the 2002 North American Industrial Classification System.

Available on CANSIM: table 080-0009.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5027.

A data table is also available in the *Canadian statistics* module online.

Data for the group of large retailers for October 2004 will be released on December 17.

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; *retailinfo@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Elton Cryderman (613-951-0669), Distributive Trades Division. ■

Honey and maple products

2004

Things were a little less sweet for producers of honey and maple syrup this year. Cool, wet weather cut Canada's output of honey, while maple syrup production also slipped.

Beekeepers produced 72 million pounds of honey, down 5% from a year earlier. At the same time, farmers produced nearly 6 million gallons of maple syrup, a modest 4% decline.

Honey output fell in two of the three Prairie provinces, which combined represent 81% of Canada's total output.

In Saskatchewan, production fell by nearly one-quarter to 15 million pounds. This was due to a cold spring, followed by a dry spell and later wet weather that hampered nectar collection in late summer. Production declined by nearly 20% in Manitoba, where producers hit a five-year low of around 12 million pounds. On the other hand, in Alberta, output was up 14% to more than 31 million pounds.

In Ontario, production fell by over one-fifth because of excessive rainfall.

The Maritimes saw similar unfavorable weather patterns and honey production declined in Nova Scotia (-13%), Prince Edward Island (-22%) and New Brunswick (-26%) compared with 2003.

Conversely, favorably warm weather hit British Columbia and a three-week head start in their production season prompted better than average yields resulting in a 40% increase in honey production. In Alberta, colony numbers increased by 6% while production shot up nearly 15% from 2003, imitating British Columbia's impressive yields compared with the rest of the country.

Their were slightly fewer beekeepers in Quebec this year due to difficulties recovering from last years losses due to varroa mite infestation, but colony and production numbers are slowly climbing in an effort to reach 2002 numbers once again.

Last year, the average Canadian honey price was just above $2 per pound while preliminary data for the current year predicts a price drop in 2004.

Quebec farmers, who account for 93% of Canada's maple syrup market, tapped more than 5 million gallons, down 4.0% from a year earlier. In Ontario, maple syrup production held steady at 218,000 gallons.

In 2004, maple syrup production in Nova Scotia decreased to 22,000 gallons, down 27% from last year. Poor weather conditions resulted in a short and low yielding maple syrup season. Conversely, New Brunswick saw a 10% increase in syrup production and a 17% increase in total value of syrup sold compared with last year.

This year, the average maple syrup price in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ontario rose to $46, $49 and $50 per gallon respectively, while Quebec's maple syrup price remained at $24 per gallon.

Production and value for 2003 and a preliminary production estimate for 2004 are now available for honey and maple products.

Available on CANSIM: tables 001-0007 and 001-0008.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3414 and 3419.

The annual bulletin *Production and Value of Honey and Maple Products, 2004* (23-221-XIB, free) is now available online. From the *Our products and services page*, under *Browse our Internet publications*, choose *Free*, then *Agriculture*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jennifer Roach (613-951-0589), Agriculture Division. ■

Canadian potato production

2003 (revised) and 2004 (preliminary)

Canada's potato production slipped only slightly this year despite the first decline in the area planted in 16 years, and the fact that farmers were unable to harvest 4,600 hectares.

Total production in 2004 was estimated at 5.2 million tonnes, down from 5.3 million tonnes the year before. The decline was kept to a minimum because of record high yields, mainly in Quebec and Alberta.

Bad weather and disease kept farmers from harvesting an estimated 4,600 hectares (11,100 acres) of the crop. Potato farmers planted 175,400 hectares (433,000 acres) in 2004, down 5.4% from 2003 and the first decline since 1988.

However, the national record for yield was broken for the second year in a row. Farmers nationwide harvested 30.39 tonnes per hectare, up from 29.17 in 2003. Farmers in Quebec experienced their largest crop since 1944 with a record-smashing yield of 30.87 tonnes per hectare. Alberta producers set a record high of 39.18 tonnes per hectare.

An unusually wet summer and warm harvest conditions in New Brunswick contributed to the abandonment of about 1,200 hectares, which was among the 4,600 hectares not harvested. Further, the adverse conditions led to unusually high cullage of the potatoes harvested. The volume already culled will be reflected in the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's November 1 storage holdings, scheduled for release later today.

Overall, Prince Edward Island farmers accounted for 25% of this year's production, Manitoba farmers 20%, and Alberta farmers 18%.

It is too early to estimate the value of the 2004 crop, but the 2003 crop was worth $882.8 million.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0014.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3401, 3407, 3446 and 3465.

Canadian Potato Production (22-008-XIE, free) is now available online. From the *Our products and services* page, choose *Free publications* then *Agriculture*.

For additional information, call (1-800-465-1991). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Barbara McLaughlin (902-893-7251; *barbara.mclaughlin@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Construction Union Wage Rate Index

October 2004

In October, the Construction Union Wage Rate Index (including supplements) for Canada remained unchanged compared with the September level of 128.3 (1992=100). The Composite index increased 0.1% compared with the October 2003 index.

Union wage rates are published for 16 trades in 20 metropolitan areas for both the basic rates and rates including selected supplementary payments. Indexes on a 1992=100 time base are calculated for the same metropolitan areas and are published for those where a majority of trades are covered by current collective agreements.

Available on CANSIM: tables 327-0003 and 327-0004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2307.

The fourth quarter 2004 issue of *Capital Expenditure Price Statistics* (62-007-XPB, $26/$85) will be available in March 2005.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services Unit (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; *infounit@statcan.ca*) or Louise Chaîné (613-951-3393), Prices Division. ■

Crude oil and natural gas

September 2004 (preliminary)

Provincial crude oil and marketable natural gas production data are now available for September 2004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2198.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; *energ@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Canadian Potato Production, November 2004, Vol. 2, no. 2
Catalogue number 22-008-XIE
(free).

Production and Value of Honey and Maple Products, 2004
Catalogue number 23-221-XIB
(free).

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

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

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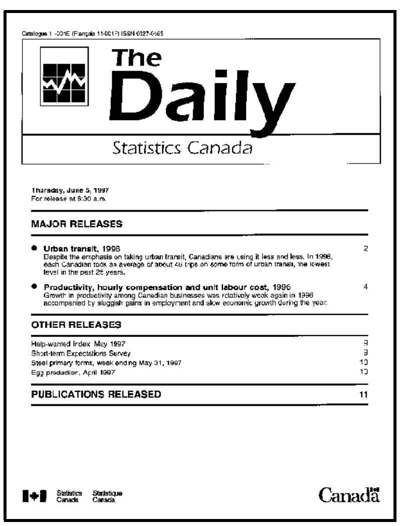
Authorized agents and bookstores also carry Statistics Canada's catalogued publications.


Catalogue 11-001E (Français 11-001F) ISSN 0827-0465

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 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.

OTHER RELEASES

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Egg production, April 1997	10

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Canada

Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001-XIE.

Published each working day by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10-H, R.H. Coats Bldg., Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.

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RELEASE DATES: NOVEMBER 22 TO 26

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
22	**Retail trade**	September 2004
22	**Survey of Suppliers of Business Financing**	2003
23	**Consumer Price Index**	October 2004
23	**Leading Indicators**	October 2004
24	**Financial statistics for enterprises**	Third quarter, 2004
24	**A step forward, a step back: Smoking cessation and relapse**	2002-2003
25	**Net farm income**	2003 (annual)
25	**Farm cash receipts**	Third quarter 2004
26	**Characteristics of international travellers**	Second quarter 2004
26	**International travel account**	Third quarter 2004