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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

OTHER RELEASES

MAJOR RELEASES

March intentions of principal field crops

March 2004

Western Canadian farmers reported that they intend to rotate out of wheat and coarse grains and into oilseeds. Field pea area could be a record this year. In Ontario and Quebec, farmers indicated there could be an increase in grain corn and soybeans, with a record area of soybeans to be planted.

Canola acreage continues to climb

Prairie canola producers reported that they intend to increase acreage to 12.6 million acres, an increase of 9% or 1.1 million acres from 2003. The five-year average is 11.2 million acres.

Seeding intentions of major grains and oilseeds

Crop	2003	2004	2003 to 2004
	'000s of acres		% change
Total wheat	26,271	25,713	-2.1
Spring wheat	18,562	18,221	-1.8
Barley	12,469	11,694	-6.2
Canola	11,702	12,760	9.0
Summerfallow	8,915	8,695	-2.5
Durum wheat	6,135	6,025	-1.8
Oats	5,614	5,049	-10.1
Dry field peas	3,220	3,355	4.2
Corn for grain	3,125	3,244	3.8
Soybeans	2,597	3,020	16.3
Flaxseed	1,840	1,925	4.6

Factors contributing to the decision to seed canola include prices, cost of production and rotational concerns. Moisture conditions at seeding could still have a major impact on the area actually planted to crops such as canola.

Spring wheat off slightly in the West

Farmers in Western Canada reported a small decline in intended spring wheat plantings. Declines were reported in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while Alberta farmers reported a small increase. The area planted to spring wheat in the west dropped 2% to 17.9 million acres. By comparison, the five-year planted average is 19.5 million acres.

Durum area declines slightly

Western farmers intend to plant 6.0 million acres of durum this year, a decrease of 2% or 110,000 acres. Planted area will remain above the five-year average of 5.7 million acres. Trade forecasts for limited demand and reported stock increases have been pressuring prices down making durum less attractive.

Durum area has fluctuated significantly over the past 10 years, a function of expected price and planting conditions. Planted area has ranged from 3.6 million in 1993 to 7.3 million in 1998.

Barley area edges down

The area seeded to barley in Western Canada could fall 6%, but remain within recent estimates. At 11.0 million acres, this year's seeded area should remain in the range of the last five years of 10.1 million acres to 11.8 million acres.

All western provinces reported declines with the exception of Manitoba where an increase of 50,000 acres was reported. The decline may be attributed in part to an overall trend from grain crops into oilseeds.

Pea area inches forward to a new record

Western farmers reported a potential increase in area of 135,000 acres over 2003 to reach a record 3.4 million acres. The previous record set in 2001 was 3.3 million acres. The largest provincial increase this year was reported in Saskatchewan with a gain of 110,000 acres to a total of 2.6 million acres. Industry analysts are forecasting good returns for peas this year in comparison with many other crops.

Ontario and Quebec farmers set to plant record soybean crop

In reaction to strong commodity prices, eastern soybean producers reported that they intend to seed 2.7 million acres of soybeans, an area slightly eclipsing the previous record of 2.6 million acres set in 2000.

Corn seeded area in the east should remain strong at 3.0 million acres, just narrowly missing the record of 3.1 million acres set in 2001. This represents an increase of 4% from 2003. Continued use in the hog industry as a feed ration, and demand for the distillation of fuel ethanol were seen as reasons for the increase.

Available on CANSIM: tables 001-0004, 001-0010 and 001-0017 to 001-0020.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3401.

The publication *Field Crop Reporting Series No. 2: March Intentions of Principal Field Crop Areas, Canada, 2001*, Vol. 82, no. 2 (22-002-XIB, $12/$71; 22-002-XPB, $17/$95) is now available. See *How to order products*.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact David Burroughs (613-951-5138; *david.burroughs@statcan.ca*), Dave Roeske (613-951-0572; *dave.roeske@statcan.ca*), Heather Smith (613-951-0730; *heather.smith@statcan.ca*), or Nicole Strang (613-951-2511; *nicole.strang@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Monthly Survey of Large Retailers

February 2004

Consumer appetites for big ticket furniture and electronic items for their homes provided a shot in the arm for Canada's large retailers in February, according to data from the Monthly Survey of Large Retailers that are seasonally adjusted for the first time.

The group of about 80 large retailers included in this survey sold more than $1.1 billion in furniture, home furnishings and electronics in February, up 3.4% from January. It was the strongest percentage gain in nearly two years.

However, even with this big gain, overall sales for large retailers edged down 0.6% to just over $7.5 billion, following a 3.3% surge in January.

Half of the major commodity groups advanced in February, with the strongest growth in sales of furniture, home furnishings and electronics. Other goods and services and food and beverage sales declined in the month.

The group of large retailers represents about 28% of total annual retail sales. If recreational and motor vehicle dealers are excluded, the proportion rises to 38%.

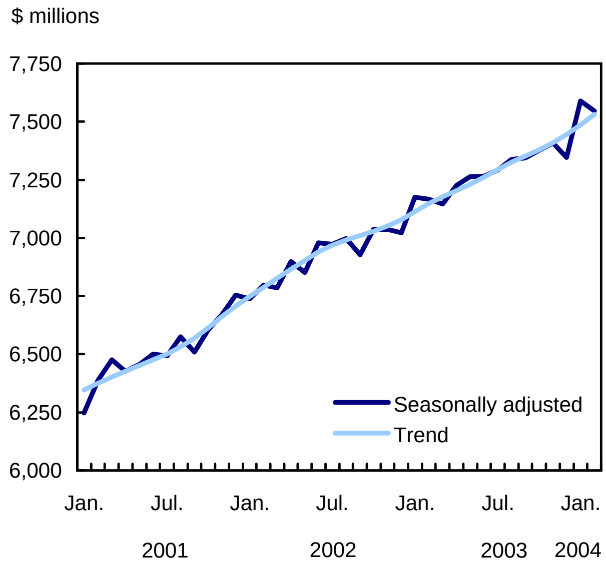
Data are seasonally adjusted from 1997. Seasonal adjustment permits direct month-to-month analysis such as comparisons between December and January, which would not be as meaningful using unadjusted data because of radically different consumer shopping patterns.

Furniture flourishes in February

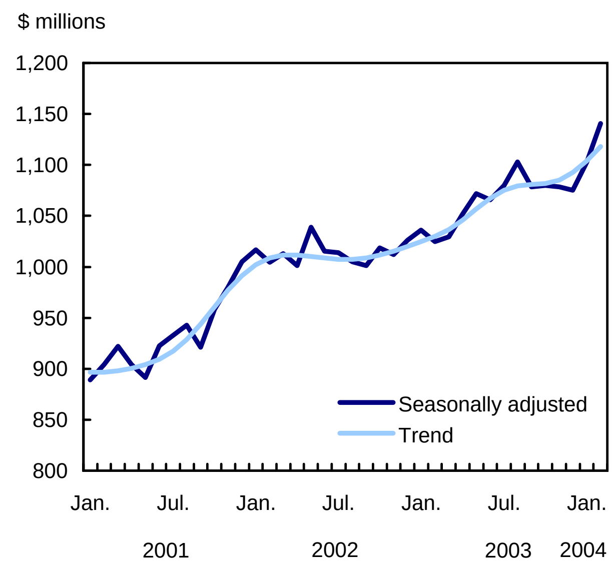
Housing starts and home sales, which remain near record highs, may be stimulating consumer appetite for some of these big ticket items. Furniture sales jumped 7.5% in February, while sales of household appliances were up 4.3% for the group of large retailers.

On a year-over-year basis, sales of furniture, home furnishings and electronics were up 11.3% from February 2003, the largest gain of any major commodity group except sporting and leisure goods.

Sales at large retailers remain at near record highs in February



Consumers buying up furniture, home furnishings and electronics



About 15 cents on every dollar spent at large retailers was spent on furniture, home furnishings and electronic goods in February. This was about half the proportion of 32 cents on every dollar consumers spent on food and beverages, and just below the 18 cents of every dollar that was spent on clothing, footwear and accessories.

Sales of sporting and leisure goods at large retailers were up 0.7% in February and 12.5% from the same month last year. This gain occurred almost entirely on the back of increased sales of pre-recorded CDs, DVDs and video tapes.

Sales of CDs and DVDs took off through the second half of 2003, after sluggish activity during the previous 12 months. Sales in February were 25.6% higher than a year earlier. CD sales were likely aided by a widely publicized decline in prices in the fall of 2003.

Sales of sporting goods, books and periodicals, and toys all declined slightly in February. However, sales were still 6% to 10% higher than a year earlier.

Another big drop in tobacco sales

Sales of tobacco products and supplies continued to dampen results within the other goods and services commodity group. Tobacco sales have been in decline since June 2003 for large retailers, and were down 12.7% from February 2003.

The other goods and services category posted the strongest decrease in February (-5.4%), reversing much of the 6.9% gain realized in January. Food and beverage sales also declined in February, down 1.8% after a 3.0% increase the previous month.

Sales by commodity for the group of large retailers

	February 2003[r]	January 2004[r]	February 2004[p]	January to February 2004	February 2003 to February 2004
	seasonally adjusted				
	$ millions			% change	
Commodity					
Food and beverages	2,338	2,453	2,409	-1.8	3.0
Health and personal care products	681	732	738	0.7	8.4
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,286	1,353	1,358	0.4	5.7
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics	1,024	1,102	1,140	3.4	11.3
Housewares	336	334	334	-0.2	-0.8
Hardware, lawn and garden products	272	303	301	-0.8	10.7
Sporting and leisure goods	374	417	420	0.7	12.5
All other goods and services	856	894	845	-5.4	-1.3
Total	**7,166**	**7,589**	**7,545**	**-0.6**	**5.3**

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

Clothing sales improving steadily

Sales of clothing, footwear and accessories increased in February, up 0.4%. These sales have been improving steadily over the past year for the group of large retailers, after going through a period of decline in the final months of 2002 and early 2003.

Women's and girls' clothing sales posted strong increases in February. However, men's clothing sales provided a downward tug, declining for the second time in three months.

Sales by commodity for the group of large retailers

	January 2004[r]	February 2003[r]	February 2004[p]	February 2003 to February 2004
	unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Commodity				
Food and beverages	2,470	2,082	2,194	5.4
Health and personal care products	707	606	671	10.8
Clothing, footwear and accessories	923	819	892	8.9
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics	976	765	876	14.5
Housewares	326	274	280	2.1
Hardware, lawn and garden products	164	142	161	13.6
Sporting and leisure goods	296	225	261	15.9
All other goods and services	782	678	691	2.0
Total	**6,643**	**5,590**	**6,026**	**7.8**

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

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.

Unadjusted figures for 1997 to 2003 have been revised with this release and are also available on CANSIM.

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 March 2004 will be released on May 19.

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. ■

OTHER RELEASES

Greenhouse, Sod and Nursery Industries

2003

Canadian greenhouse area seems to have reached a plateau at just over 202 million square feet in 2003. The increase in square footage over 2002 was 2%, which is fairly mild compared with the doubling of greenhouse area that occurred throughout the 1990s. In 2002, greenhouse area showed an increase of 4% and the year before that, a 10% increase. Despite the peak being reached in greenhouse area, sales of greenhouse commodities have continued to rise impressively. In 2003, greenhouse sales rose 3% reaching a high of nearly $2.1 billion.

More farmers in Canada are responding to the growing demand for nursery products including ornamental trees and shrubs, fruit trees and perennials. There was a 7% boost in nursery area in 2003 and total nursery sales amounted to nearly $544 million. The sod industry is a success story as well, since the demand for sod has more than doubled in the past five years. The area devoted to growing sod increased by 7% last year alone. Total sod sales increased by 21%, reaching $105 million, indicating a strong market for sod farmers.

The greenhouse, sod and nursery industries are thriving as a result of high rates of home construction and continued landscaping of existent homes. According to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, because of low mortgage rates, total housing starts for 2003 were at their highest level since 1988, a 6.2% increase over 2002.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0006.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3416.

The 2003 issue of *Greenhouse, Sod and Nursery Industries* (22-202-XIB, $31) is now available. See *How to order products*.

For more information, contact Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact William Parsons (613-951-8727; *bill.parsons@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Deliveries of major grains

March 2004

Data on grain deliveries for March are now available.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0001.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3403, 3404 and 3443.

The March 2004 issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, $12/$120) will be available in May.

For more information, contact Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Karen Gray (204-983-2856; *karen.gray@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Cereals and Oilseeds Review

February 2004

During March, Chicago soybean futures' prices continued to rally based on forecasts of lower crop production and transportation problems in Brazil. Corn futures' prices also rallied, supported by steady export demand and spillover gains from soybeans.

In Winnipeg, old-crop canola futures' prices were lifted by the surging soybean prices. Nearby contracts reached $439 a tonne before settling back to $431 a tonne in the last week of the month. Flaxseed cash prices were also caught up in the oilseed rally. Western barley futures' prices rose from their January–February lows. Strength in the barley futures' prices was attributed to the bullish US grains situation and tighter-US feed grain carryover stock expectations.

The data from the February 2004 issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* are now available. The information includes data on production, stocks, prices, domestic processing, exports, farmers' deliveries, and supply-disposition analyses.

The March situation report, an overview of current market conditions, both domestic and international, is also included in the February issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, $12/$120), which will be available later in April 2004.

For general information, contact Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Les Macartney (613-951-8714; *les.macartney@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Crushing statistics

March 2004

According to the monthly survey of crushing plants, Canadian oilseed processors crushed 325 247 metric tonnes of canola in March. Oil production last month totalled 132 518 tonnes while meal production amounted to 203 764 tonnes.

The volume of canola crushed is a record high for March, falling just shy of the overall monthly record set in October 1998 (325 303 tonnes). Two-thirds into this crop year, cumulative canola crush has surpassed the total tonnage for crop year 2002/03.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3404.

The March 2004 issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, $12/$120) will be available in May.

For general information, contact Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Les Macartney (613-951-8714, *les.macartney@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Aircraft movement statistics

2003

The 2003 annual report *Aircraft Movement Statistics* (TP577, free) is now available on Transport Canada's website (*http://www.tc.gc.ca/pol/en/Report/TP577/tp577.htm*). For more information on this website, contact Michel Villeneuve (613-990-3825; *villenm@tc.gc.ca*) or Sheila Rajani (613-993-9822; *rajanis@tc.gc.ca*), Transport Canada.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2715.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Kathie Davidson (613-951-0141; fax: 613-951-0010; *aviationstatistics@statcan.ca*), Transportation Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Field Crop Reporting Series: March Intentions of Principal Field Crop Areas, Canada, 2004, Vol. 83, no. 2
Catalogue number 22-002-XIB ($12/$71).

Field Crop Reporting Series: March Intentions of Principal Field Crop Areas, Canada, 2004, Vol. 83, no. 2
Catalogue number 22-002-XPB ($17/$95).

Greenhouse, Sod and Nursery Industries, 2003
Catalogue number 22-202-XIB ($31).

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 or –XDE are electronic versions on diskette and -XCB or –XCE are electronic versions on compact disc.

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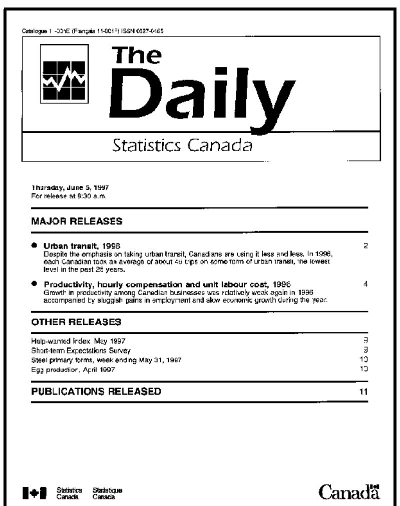
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Thursday, June 5, 1997
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **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.

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index, May 1997	9
Short-term Expectations Survey	9
Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997	10
Egg production, April 1997	10

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED — 11

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RELEASE DATES: APRIL 26 TO APRIL 30

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
26	**National Graduates Survey**	2002
27	**Retail Trade**	February 2004
27	**Wholesale Trade**	February 2004
27	**Employment Insurance**	February 2004
28	**Provincial Economic Accounts**	2003 preliminary
29	**Industrial Product and Raw Materials Price Indexes**	March 2004
29	**Business Conditions Survey: Canadian Manufacturing Industries**	April 2004
29	**Employment, Earnings and Hours**	February 2004
30	**Gross Domestic Product by Industry**	February 2004
30	**Adult Education Training Survey: Workers Who Learn**	2002