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Releases

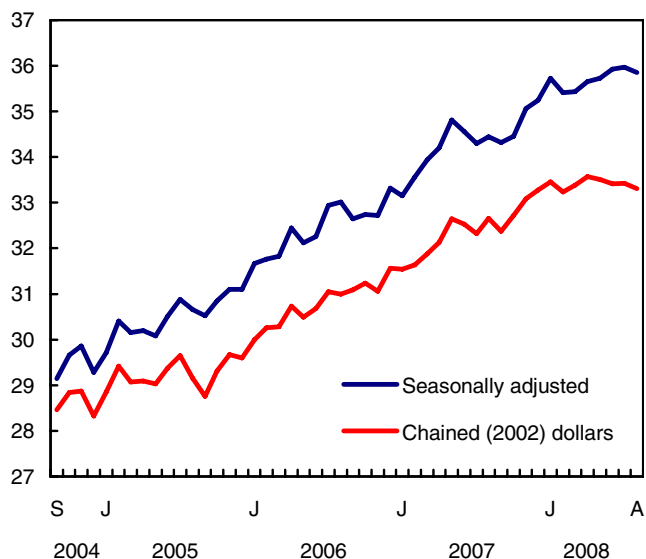
Retail trade

August 2008

Retail sales fell by 0.3% in August to \$35.9 billion. Lower sales in the automotive sector more than offset higher sales in five of the seven other sectors of the retail trade industry. Excluding the entire automotive sector, retail sales in the other seven sectors combined rose by 0.4%.

Retail sales decline in August

\$ billions



On the whole, price changes had little effect as retail sales in volume terms also declined by 0.3% in August. This was the third decrease in four months.

Much of the 1.8% sales decline reported by the automotive sector in August was largely attributable to a 3.7% drop in sales at gasoline stations.

Sales by gasoline stations fell for the first time since September 2007. During that period of strong price-influenced increases, sales at gasoline stations rose by 27.0%.

New car dealers saw their sales fall for a seventh consecutive month. According to the New Motor Vehicle Sales Survey, the number of vehicles sold has been on a downward trend in recent months. August marked the 14th straight month in which the purchase and

Note to readers

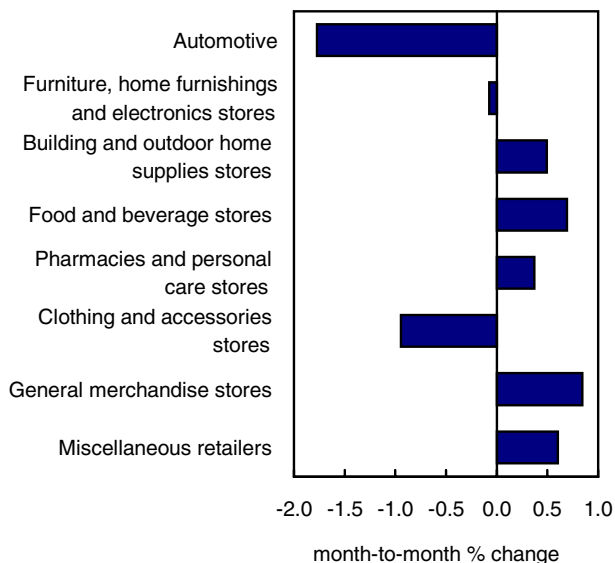
Total retail sales in volume are measured by deflating values in current dollars of the various trade groups using consumer price indexes. This retail sales in chained dollars series (2002) is based on a chain Fisher volume index with 2002 as the reference year.

leasing prices for automotive vehicles declined year over year, according to the Consumer Price Index.

Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers saw robust sales in August, the third increase in four months.

Aside from the decline in the automotive sector, sales at clothing and accessories stores (-0.9%) declined for a second consecutive month in August. Sales in this sector have increased only slightly since mid-2007.

Automotive sales decline while most of the other sectors increase in August



Of the five sectors that registered sales increases in August, the two highest were in the general merchandise stores and the food and beverage stores sectors. For the latter sector, the largest rise came from supermarkets where sales increased for the fifth time since the beginning of 2008.

Little change in sales in most provinces

British Columbia posted the largest decline in retail sales among the provinces, falling 0.9% in August. Following a long period of growth that lasted for over four years, sales in British Columbia have remained relatively flat since the end of 2007.

Retailers in Quebec and New Brunswick posted lower sales after four consecutive monthly increases.

Sales changed very little in the other provinces in August.

It is now possible to consult the tables of raw data by industry and by province and territory from the *By subject* module of our website.

For information on related indicators, refer to the *Latest statistics* page on our website.

Available on CANSIM: tables 080-0014 to 080-0017.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2406 and 2408.

The August 2008 issue of *Retail Trade* (63-005-XWE, free) will be available shortly.

Data on retail trade for September will be released on November 25.

For more information, or to order data, contact Client Services (613-951-3549; toll-free 1-877-421-3067; retailinfo@statcan.gc.ca). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Claude Bilodeau (613-951-1816), Distributive Trades Division.



Retail sales

	August 2007	May 2008 ^r	June 2008 ^r	July 2008 ^r	August 2008 ^p	July to August 2008	August 2007 to August 2008
Seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions					% change	
Automotive	11,747	12,475	12,452	12,413	12,193	-1.8	3.8
New car dealers	6,476	6,291	6,076	6,019	5,946	-1.2	-8.2
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,567	1,569	1,578	1,575	1,607	2.1	2.5
Gasoline stations	3,704	4,614	4,798	4,820	4,640	-3.7	25.3
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores	2,534	2,628	2,650	2,700	2,698	-0.1	6.5
Furniture stores	839	871	877	892	891	-0.1	6.2
Home furnishings stores	511	519	529	533	529	-0.8	3.4
Computer and software stores	118	121	123	125	121	-3.3	2.3
Home electronics and appliance stores	1,065	1,117	1,121	1,150	1,158	0.7	8.7
Building and outdoor home supplies stores	2,243	2,265	2,290	2,317	2,329	0.5	3.8
Home centres and hardware stores	1,817	1,850	1,878	1,896	1,910	0.7	5.1
Specialized building materials and garden stores	426	416	412	422	419	-0.5	-1.5
Food and beverage stores	7,643	7,831	7,937	7,894	7,949	0.7	4.0
Supermarkets	5,470	5,618	5,691	5,669	5,716	0.8	4.5
Convenience and specialty food stores	823	819	830	834	832	-0.2	1.0
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,349	1,395	1,416	1,391	1,401	0.7	3.9
Pharmacies and personal care stores	2,389	2,429	2,429	2,459	2,468	0.4	3.3
Clothing and accessories stores	2,020	2,002	2,048	2,033	2,014	-0.9	-0.3
Clothing stores	1,546	1,536	1,569	1,561	1,542	-1.2	-0.3
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	474	466	479	472	472	0.0	-0.5
General merchandise stores	4,078	4,265	4,286	4,311	4,347	0.8	6.6
Miscellaneous retailers	1,792	1,835	1,837	1,846	1,857	0.6	3.6
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	883	917	924	914	924	1.0	4.6
Miscellaneous store retailers	909	918	913	931	933	0.2	2.7
Total retail sales	34,445	35,731	35,929	35,973	35,855	-0.3	4.1
Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	26,402	27,870	28,275	28,380	28,301	-0.3	7.2
Total excluding the automotive sector	22,698	23,256	23,477	23,560	23,662	0.4	4.2
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland and Labrador	550	573	590	602	599	-0.4	8.9
Prince Edward Island	139	141	145	143	142	-0.2	2.8
Nova Scotia	972	1,007	1,015	1,029	1,027	-0.2	5.6
New Brunswick	786	815	819	841	834	-0.8	6.1
Quebec	7,564	7,978	7,985	8,045	7,988	-0.7	5.6
Ontario	12,239	12,754	12,799	12,843	12,842	0.0	4.9
Manitoba	1,166	1,251	1,261	1,250	1,252	0.2	7.4
Saskatchewan	1,089	1,202	1,213	1,217	1,216	-0.1	11.7
Alberta	5,104	5,113	5,138	5,090	5,083	-0.1	-0.4
British Columbia	4,713	4,766	4,834	4,785	4,742	-0.9	0.6
Yukon	42	45	45	45	44	-1.0	5.5
Northwest Territories	57	60	59	58	58	1.0	3.0
Nunavut	23	26	26	26	25	-3.8	6.5

^r revised

^p preliminary

Note: Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.



Leading indicators

September 2008

The composite leading index dipped 0.2% in September, after a 0.3% gain in August capped a string of five consecutive increases. Most of the reversal originated in a sharp drop in the stock market; excluding it, the composite index would have been unchanged. Overall, five of the nine other components retreated, while one was unchanged.

The smoothed version of the Toronto stock market fell by 3.1%, its first decline since March due to a 14.7% drop in the unsmoothed version.

The leading indicator for the United States fell for the 13th straight month, dating back to the onset of the global credit crisis in August 2007. The year-long weakness in autos and housing was followed by a further deterioration of labour market conditions. Nevertheless, consumer confidence recovered as the price of gas receded.

The outlook for a continued recovery of Canada's manufacturing sector was marred by weaker US demand. New orders contracted 2.1% after two months of growth, led by lower demand for capital goods other than aerospace products. The ratio of shipments to inventories was unchanged, as both shipments and inventories increased at the same rate for the third month in a row.

The buoyancy of household demand earlier in the year faded over the summer. While demand continued to grow for furniture and appliances, spending on other durable goods fell 0.3% for the second straight month. It had risen by over 1% a month early in 2008, just after the Goods and Services Tax was cut. The housing index edged down for the fourth straight month, as slower sales of existing homes outweighed a rebound in housing starts. Services employment remained buoyed by the personal sector. While jobs expanded rapidly in September, total employment edged down 0.1% in the third quarter.

Available on CANSIM: table 377-0003.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 1601.

This release will be reprinted in the November issue of *Canadian Economic Observer*, Vol. 21, no. 11 (11-010-XIB, free). For more information on the economy, consult the *Canadian Economic Observer*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Philip Cross (613-951-9162; ceo@statcan.gc.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.

Leading indicators

	April 2008	May 2008	June 2008	July 2008	August 2008	September 2008	Last month of data available % change
Composite leading indicator (1992=100)	228.2	229.0	229.2	229.5	230.3	229.9	-0.2
Housing index (1992=100) ¹	139.4	141.7	141.1	137.0	135.0	134.9	-0.1
Business and personal services employment ('000)	2,903	2,918	2,934	2,939	2,952	2,958	0.2
S&P/TSX stock price index (1975=1,000)	13,572	13,748	14,010	14,012	14,097	13,660	-3.1
Money supply, M1 (\$ millions, 1992) ²	171,931	172,168	172,104	172,281	172,725	173,546	0.5
US Conference Board leading indicator (1992=100) ³	124.5	124.3	124.2	124.1	124.0	123.7	-0.2
Manufacturing							
Average workweek (hours)	37.9	37.9	37.9	37.8	37.9	37.8	-0.3
New orders, durables (\$ millions, 1992) ⁴	26,422	27,311	26,718	27,682	28,554	27,964	-2.1
Shipments/inventories of finished goods ⁴	1.80	1.78	1.77	1.77	1.77	1.77	0.00 ⁵
Retail trade							
Furniture and appliance sales (\$ millions, 1992) ⁴	2,818	2,838	2,853	2,871	2,881	2,909	1.0
Other durable goods sales (\$ millions, 1992) ⁴	9,604	9,676	9,743	9,752	9,723	9,697	-0.3
Unsmoothed composite leading indicator	229.9	230.4	230.3	229.5	231.5	228.0	-1.5

1. Composite index of housing starts (units) and house sales (multiple listing service).

2. Deflated by the Consumer Price Index for all items.

3. The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for the month immediately preceding.

4. The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated, but the figures themselves refer to data for the second preceding month.

5. Difference from previous month.

Farm Product Price Index

August 2008

Prices farmers received for their commodities were down 3.1% in August from July 2008, as a decrease in the crops index offset a 4.1% rise in the livestock and animal products index.

On a year-over-year basis, prices received by producers for crops were up 17.0% in August compared with August 2007, maintaining the double-digit increases that had begun in November 2006. However, both grain and oilseed prices dropped in August compared with July. Crop prices have found support from continued demand and uncertainty over new crop production. However, as North American producers start to fill their bins with this year's harvest, reports of higher production has put recent downward pressure on grain and oilseed prices.

The overall August prices for livestock and animal products increased 6.5% over their August 2007 level, as all commodities recorded an increase. August marked the first year-over-year increase in the hog index since May 2007. The lower Canadian dollar and continued demand provided support for hog prices. In August, the Canadian dollar lost 4.1% of its value in relation to the US dollar, pushing it to the lowest average level in 12 months.

Note: The growth rate of the total Farm Product Price Index (FPPI) is not a weighted average of the growth rates of its crop and livestock components. The growth rate of the total FPPI is derived from a weighted average of the component indices using a different set of weights in consecutive months. Given this, the growth rate of the composite FPPI can lie outside the growth rate of the components.

Available on CANSIM: tables 002-0021 and 002-0022.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5040.

The August 2008 issue of *Farm Product Price Index*, Vol. 8, no. 8 (21-007-XWE, free), is now available from the *Publications* module on our website under *Free Internet publications*, then *Agriculture*.

For more information, or to order data, call Client Services (toll-free 1-800-465-1991). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Nickeisha Patterson (613-951-3249; fax: 613-951-3868; nickeisha.patterson@statcan.gc.ca), Agriculture Division.

Farm Product Price Index

	August 2007 ^r	July 2008 ^r	August 2008 ^p	August 2007 to August 2008	July to August 2008
	(1997=100)			% change	
Farm Product Price Index	109.9	125.6	121.7	10.7	-3.1
Crops	113.8	146.0	133.1	17.0	-8.8
Grains	149.2	175.2	150.7	1.0	-14.0
Oilseeds	98.7	155.8	143.6	45.5	-7.8
Specialty crops	117.9	189.6	198.3	68.2	4.6
Fruit	112.5	117.7	116.9	3.9	-0.7
Vegetables	113.6	117.2	116.2	2.3	-0.9
Potatoes	169.9	174.3	198.6	16.9	13.9
Livestock and animal products	105.4	107.9	112.3	6.5	4.1
Cattle and calves	103.6	109.0	108.3	4.5	-0.6
Hogs	75.2	73.5	84.9	12.9	15.5
Poultry	102.9	116.0	118.2	14.9	1.9
Eggs	102.6	108.7	111.2	8.4	2.3
Dairy	137.0	135.9	141.1	3.0	3.8

^r revised

^p preliminary

Railway carloadings

August 2008

Canadian railways loaded 22.6 million metric tonnes in August, down 9.0% from August 2007.

The drop in loadings was largely the result of declines in non-intermodal loadings of agricultural and food products, such as wheat and colza seeds, and forestry and paper products, such as lumber and other wood products. Manufactured products, particularly parts and accessories for motor vehicles, also fell during the month.

The decline in these commodity groups, combined with decreases in other groups, pushed non-intermodal loadings down to 20.2 million metric tonnes, a decrease of 9.7% from August 2007.

Intermodal loadings fell 3.6% from August 2007 to 2.5 million metric tonnes. The decline was the result of a drop in both containers and trailers loaded on flat cars.

Rail freight traffic received from the United States increased 1.0% from last year's level to 2.9 million metric tonnes.

Note: CANSIM Table 404-0002 has been modified to include additional railway carloading components from January 1999 to July 2008.

Available on CANSIM: table 404-0002.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2732.

Natural gas sales

The August 2008 issue of *Monthly Railway Carloadings*, Vol. 85, no. 8 (52-001-XWE, free), is now available from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the Dissemination Unit (toll-free 1-866-500-8400; fax: 613-951-0009; transportationstatistics@statcan.gc.ca), Transportation Division. ■

Natural gas sales

August 2008 (preliminary)

Natural gas sales totalled 3 905 million cubic metres in August, down 8.1% from August 2007.

Volumes of sales to the residential (-13.7%), commercial (-8.9%) and industrial including direct (-7.2%) sectors were down from August 2007.

Total sales were down 1.1% compared with July 2008.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2149.

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

	August 2008 ^P	August 2007	August 2007 to August 2008 % change
	thousands of cubic metres		
Total sales	3 905 250	4 250 175	-8.1
Residential ¹	425 685	493 050	-13.7
Commercial ²	335 425	368 059	-8.9
Industrial ³ and direct sales ⁴	3 144 140	3 389 066	-7.2

^P preliminary

1. Gas sold for domestic purposes, including space heating, water heating and cooking, to a residential dwelling unit.

2. Gas sold to customers engaged in wholesale or retail trade, governments, institutions, office buildings, etc.

3. Gas sold to customers engaged in a process that creates or changes raw or unfinished materials into another form or product. Includes mining and manufacturing establishments. Includes firm, interruptible and buy/sell agreements.

4. Represents direct, non-utility, sales for consumption, where the utility acts solely as the transporter. ■

New products

Farm Product Price Index, August 2008, Vol. 8, no. 8
Catalogue number 21-007-XWE
(free).

Monthly Railway Carloadings, August 2008, Vol. 85,
no. 8
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