Catalogue 11-001-XIE (Français 11-001-XIF) ISSN 1205-9137

The Daily

Statistics Canada

Monday, February 23, 2009
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time

Releases

Releases

Retail trade

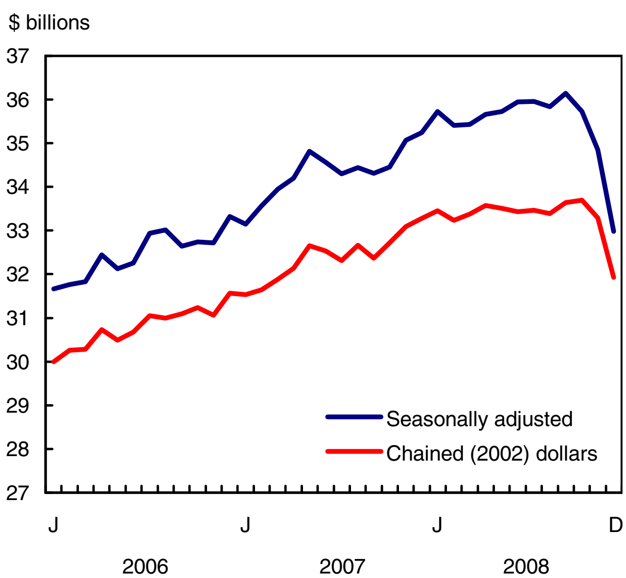
December 2008

Widespread declines in all sectors pushed retail sales down 5.4% in December to $33.0 billion. This was the largest monthly decline in over 15 years, exceeding the 4.5% sales drop in January 1998 when an ice storm crippled part of the country. Combined with the declines observed since October, retail sales in December were at their lowest level since November 2006.

In December, three-quarters of the overall retail decline stemmed from the automotive sector. Excluding the automotive sector (which includes new, used and recreational vehicle and parts dealers as well as gasoline stations), retail sales fell 1.8%.

In volume terms, retail sales fell 4.1%, mostly reflecting a large reduction in unit sales of motor vehicles at new car dealers.

All retail sectors post weaker sales in December



The automotive sector posted, by far, the largest monthly decline in December, with sales falling 12.7%. The main contributor was a 15.1% sales decline at new car dealers. This reflects the largest monthly drop in the number of new motor vehicles sold since January 1998, according to the New Motor Vehicles Sales Survey.

Note to readers

Total retail sales by 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 a chain Fisher volume index with 2002 as the reference year.

At the end of each calendar year, seasonally adjusted monthly figures are revised to equal the sum of the unadjusted estimates. Revised seasonally adjusted figures are presented this month for September to November 2008. The complete revision of seasonally adjusted data for the 2008 calendar year will be released in April 2009. All current dollar annual comparisons in this release use the sum of unadjusted monthly estimates.

Sales at gasoline stations fell 11.7% in December, and have dropped 28.8% since September 2008, largely reflecting falling prices at the pump.

In non-automotive retailing, the largest decline in December was in the building and outdoor home supplies stores sector, where sales fell 5.6%. Sales in this sector have been falling since September 2008 as housing has slumped.

Holiday shopping down in December

Significant monthly decreases were also registered in sectors traditionally associated with holiday shopping. Sales in the clothing and accessories stores sector fell 3.7% in December, continuing several months of declines. Sales at furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores and miscellaneous retailers (such as sporting goods and book stores) declined by more than 2%. General merchandise stores were affected to a lesser extent, as their sales fell 0.4%.

Retail sales down across the country

Retail sales fell by at least 3% in all provinces in December.

The largest decline among all provinces was a 6.2% sales drop in Alberta. Sales in this province have been generally weak throughout 2008 after reaching a plateau in 2007.

In Ontario, sales fell 6.0% in December. After a strong start in 2008, sales in Ontario flattened and have declined sharply since September 2008.

Saskatchewan's 5.8% sales decrease in December comes after a strong period of growth from the beginning of 2006 until mid-2008.

In British Columbia, December's drop of 5.6% brought sales to their lowest levels since February 2006.

Retail sales in 2008

In Canada, retail sales increased 3.2% to $425.3 billion in 2008, following gains of 5.8% in 2007 and 6.4% in 2006. The main contributor to this lower growth rate was sales at new car dealers, which fell 4.7%.

In volume terms, retail sales rose 2.9% in 2008, compared with 5.2% in 2007.

It is now possible to consult the tables of raw data by industry and by province and territory from the *Tables 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 December 2008 issue of *Retail Trade* (63-005-XWE, free) will be available shortly.

Data on retail trade for January will be released on March 20.

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 Lucy Chung (613-951-1903), Distributive Trades Division.

❑

Retail sales

	December 2007	September 2008^r	October 2008^r	November 2008^r	December 2008^p	November to December 2008	December 2007 to December 2008
	Seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Automotive	**12,376**	**12,456**	**12,207**	**11,314**	**9,878**	**-12.7**	**-20.2**
New car dealers	6,473	6,107	6,067	5,861	4,976	-15.1	-23.1
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,644	1,641	1,663	1,653	1,548	-6.3	-5.8
Gasoline stations	4,259	4,708	4,477	3,800	3,354	-11.7	-21.2
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores	**2,496**	**2,630**	**2,546**	**2,539**	**2,472**	**-2.6**	**-1.0**
Furniture stores	827	868	825	834	809	-3.0	-2.2
Home furnishings stores	503	520	497	480	455	-5.2	-9.5
Computer and software stores	114	115	116	110	102	-7.3	-10.6
Home electronics and appliance stores	1,052	1,127	1,107	1,115	1,105	-0.8	5.1
Building and outdoor home supplies stores	**2,229**	**2,280**	**2,263**	**2,255**	**2,129**	**-5.6**	**-4.5**
Home centres and hardware stores	1,818	1,855	1,842	1,845	1,718	-6.8	-5.5
Specialized building materials and garden stores	411	424	421	411	410	-0.1	-0.2
Food and beverage stores	**7,759**	**8,074**	**8,101**	**8,153**	**8,072**	**-1.0**	**4.0**
Supermarkets	5,566	5,828	5,874	5,893	5,863	-0.5	5.3
Convenience and specialty food stores	835	839	839	846	829	-2.0	-0.6
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,359	1,406	1,388	1,414	1,379	-2.5	1.5
Pharmacies and personal care stores	**2,393**	**2,451**	**2,464**	**2,459**	**2,437**	**-0.9**	**1.8**
Clothing and accessories stores	**1,983**	**2,020**	**1,977**	**1,974**	**1,901**	**-3.7**	**-4.1**
Clothing stores	1,513	1,548	1,513	1,519	1,468	-3.4	-3.0
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	470	472	464	455	433	-4.7	-7.8
General merchandise stores	**4,214**	**4,410**	**4,360**	**4,344**	**4,328**	**-0.4**	**2.7**
Miscellaneous retailers	**1,797**	**1,819**	**1,806**	**1,814**	**1,770**	**-2.4**	**-1.5**
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	888	898	882	896	895	-0.1	0.7
Miscellaneous store retailers	909	920	924	918	876	-4.6	-3.6
Total retail sales	**35,248**	**36,140**	**35,722**	**34,853**	**32,988**	**-5.4**	**-6.4**
Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	**27,131**	**28,391**	**27,993**	**27,338**	**26,463**	**-3.2**	**-2.5**
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland and Labrador	569	612	613	590	564	-4.5	-1.0
Prince Edward Island	138	146	144	142	136	-4.5	-1.7
Nova Scotia	978	1,055	1,024	995	951	-4.4	-2.7
New Brunswick	789	849	834	804	778	-3.2	-1.3
Quebec	7,682	8,194	8,035	7,900	7,553	-4.4	-1.7
Ontario	12,525	12,771	12,675	12,325	11,581	-6.0	-7.5
Manitoba	1,234	1,260	1,268	1,248	1,209	-3.2	-2.0
Saskatchewan	1,171	1,206	1,209	1,204	1,135	-5.8	-3.1
Alberta	5,209	5,144	5,103	4,988	4,680	-6.2	-10.2
British Columbia	4,826	4,774	4,686	4,533	4,279	-5.6	-11.3
Yukon	44	45	45	43	41	-6.5	-7.5
Northwest Territories	60	60	59	57	56	-1.5	-7.4
Nunavut	24	25	26	26	25	-0.7	6.1

^r *revised*
^p *preliminary*
Note: *Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.*

■

Farm cash receipts

2008

Market receipts for Canadian farmers from the sale of crops and livestock totalled $41.8 billion in 2008, up 14.2% from a year earlier. Including program payments, total cash receipts for 2008 amounted to $45.9 billion.

Receipts for crop producers increased 25.6% to $23.0 billion, mainly on higher prices, while livestock receipts rose 2.9% to $18.8 billion in 2008.

Revenue from the two main cash crops increased in 2008. Receipts from wheat including durum were up 36.8%, while receipts from canola were up 42.1%. Stronger prices for grains and oilseeds, particularly for the first three quarters of 2008, were mostly responsible for the increase. Prices in the fourth quarter began to drop with declines ranging from 4.0% for barley to 31.3% for wheat, when compared with the average price for the first three quarters of 2008.

Increases in crop prices resulted from a tight world supply and strong demand. Although grain and oilseed prices climbed, so did the cost of their inputs. Fertilizer prices and diesel fuel prices rose 60% and 37% respectively during the first 11 months of 2008 compared with the same period in 2007, according to the Industrial Product Price Index.

In the livestock sector, revenue from cattle and calves increased 2.7% in 2008, with lower prices and record marketings. A 5.5% increase in the value of cattle and calf exports more than offset a 0.9% drop in cattle and calf prices.

Farm cash receipts for hogs declined 3.3% as the average price was 2.0% below 2007 and marketings fell 1.3%. While receipts from domestic hog slaughter increased 2.9% in 2008, receipts from live hog exports dropped 27.5%.

Higher grain prices resulted in higher feed costs for the livestock sector. Profits were also adversely affected in 2008 by a strong Canadian dollar and uncertainty over the Country of Origin Labeling law in the United States. As the year advanced, the Canadian dollar weakened and cost-price relationships improved with the decline in grain prices.

The supply managed sector showed a 5.7% increase in farm cash receipts as both prices and marketings rose for milk, poultry and eggs. Supply-managed commodities accounted for 44% of total livestock receipts.

Program payments amounted to $4.1 billion in 2008, up 0.8% from 2007.

Receipts rose in all 10 provinces in 2008. The largest increases occurred in Saskatchewan (+23.3%) and Alberta (+15.2%).

Note: Farm cash receipts measures gross revenue for farm businesses. They do not represent their bottom line, as farmers have to pay their expenses and loans and cover depreciation. Preliminary information on net farm income for 2008 will be available in May 2009. Net farm income for 2007 was released on November 24, 2008.

Available on CANSIM: tables 002-0001 and 002-0002.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3437 and 3473.

A data table is also available from the *Summary tables* module of our website.

To order data, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-800-465-1991; fax: 613-951-3868; *agriculture@statcan.gc.ca*). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Bernie Rosien (613-951-1875; *bernie.rosien@statcan.gc.ca*) or Heather Miller (613-951-0309; *heather.miller@statcan.gc.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Natural gas sales

December 2008 (preliminary)

Natural gas sales totalled 8 667 million cubic metres in December, down 1.6% from December 2007.

The volumes of sales to the residential sector (+16.7%) and commercial sector (+7.9%) rose, while sales to the industrial, including direct, sector declined 16.9% from December 2007.

Total sales in December 2008 were 32.0% higher than those in November 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. □

Natural gas sales

	December 2008[p]	December 2007	December 2007 to December 2008
	thousands of cubic metres		% change
Total sales	**8 666 678**	**8 806 131**	**-1.6**
Residential[1]	3 141 997	2 693 118	16.7
Commercial[2]	1 942 939	1 800 924	7.9
Industrial[3] and direct sales[4]	3 581 742	4 312 089	-16.9

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.*

■

Large urban transit
December 2008 (preliminary)

Combined ridership and revenue levels for the 10 largest urban transit systems in Canada rose in December compared with the same month in 2007.

These 10 companies represent about 80% of total urban transit across the country.

Ridership levels rose 1.5% to 114.4 million passenger trips in December 2008.

The increase in ridership helped push revenue (excluding subsidies) up 3.4% from December 2007 to $205.7 million.

Both increases in ridership and revenue occurred despite a labour-management dispute involving an urban transit provider in a large Canadian city.

Available on CANSIM: table 408-0004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2745.

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

Survey of Canadian Attitudes toward Learning
2008

Data from the 2008 Survey of Canadian Attitudes toward Learning are now available.

Note: The third Survey of Canadian Attitudes toward Learning was designed in cooperation with, and sponsored by, the Canadian Council on Learning. Close to 5,500 adults aged between 18 and 74 responded to the survey. The survey addressed four aspects of learning throughout the lifespan: early childhood learning, structured learning (elementary, secondary and postsecondary), work-related learning, and health and learning.

The Canadian Council on Learning has prepared a report with further analysis of the findings. The report is available online (*www.ccl-cca.ca/SCAL2009/*).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5122.

To order data, for more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-800-307-3382; 613-951-7608; fax: 613-951-9040; *educationstats@statcan.gc.ca*), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. ■

New products

Canadian Economic Observer, February 2009,
Vol. 22, no. 2
Catalogue number 11-010-XPB ($25/$243).

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; -XCB or -XCE are electronic versions on compact disc; -XVB or -XVE are electronic versions on DVD and -XBB or -XBE a database.

How to order products

To order by phone, please refer to:

- The title
- The catalogue number
- The volume number
- The issue number
- Your credit card number.

From Canada and the United States, call:	**1-800-267-6677**
From other countries, call:	**1-613-951-2800**
To fax your order, call:	**1-877-287-4369**
For address changes or account inquiries, call:	**1-877-591-6963**

To order by mail, write to: Statistics Canada, Finance, 6th floor, R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, K1A 0T6. Include a cheque or money order payable to **Receiver General of Canada/Publications**. Canadian customers add 5% GST and applicable PST.

To order by Internet, write to: *infostats@statcan.gc.ca* or download an electronic version by accessing Statistics Canada's website *(www.statcan.gc.ca).* From the *Our products and services* page, under *Browse our Internet publications*, choose *For sale.*

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


The Daily
Statistics Canada
Releases
New products
2006 Census profiles
Canada

Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001-XIE.

Published each working day by the Communications and library Services Division, Statistics Canada, 10G, R.H. Coats Building, 100 Tunney's Pasture Driveway, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.

To access *The Daily* on the Internet, visit our site at *http://www.statcan.gc.ca.* To receive *The Daily* each morning by e-mail, send an e-mail message to *listproc@statcan.gc.ca.* Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the message, type "subscribe daily firstname lastname".