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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, SEPTEMBER, 1942

Indexes reflecting current trends in food distribution in Canada have been published for some years, indexes of retail and wholesale grocery trading establishments forming components of the two regular monthly bulletins on retail and wholesale trade issued by the Internal Trade Branch of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This series brings together in one report the information on retail and wholesale grocery sales contained in the other bulletins thus facilitating a comparison of the trends in monthly sales in the two stages of food distribution.

Wholesale Trade

The dollar volume of sales transacted by 72 of the larger grocery wholesale establishments increased by 5 per cent in September of this year over September, 1941, and increased 8 per cent over August sales. Cumulative figures for the first nine months of the current year stand 10 per cent higher than for the corresponding period last year. All regions of the country contributed to the 5 per cent increase. Ontario came first in point of view of increased business, recording a gain of 9 per cent. September sales increased by 6 per cent in the Maritimes over September, 1941, 5 per cent in Quebec, and 3 per cent in both the Prairies and British Columbia.

Inventories held by grocery wholesalers were valued 14 per cent lower at the end of September, 1942, than on the corresponding date of last year, but increased by 5 per cent over the value of stocks reported on hand on August 31, 1942. Stocks on hand at the beginning of September are normally 5 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Value of stocks on hand at the beginning of September this year was on a par with the amount of business transacted during the month, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of September, 1942, was below the normal position for that period of the year.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		September 1941	September 1942	September, 1942 over		Year to date 1942 1941
				September 1941	August 1942	
CANADA .....	72	19,687	20,744	+ 5.4	+ 7.5	+19.6
Maritimes .....	14	2,043	2,157	+ 5.6	+ 4.4	+11.8
Quebec .....	22	3,388	3,565	+ 5.2	+12.4	+ 9.4
Ontario .....	19	6,077	6,602	+ 8.6	+ 8.6	+10.6
Prairies .....	11	5,789	5,949	+ 2.8	+ 7.2	+ 6.9
British Columbia .....	6	2,390	2,471	+ 3.4	+ 8.0	+11.0

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 989 chain store units operated by 25 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 3 per cent higher in September, 1942, than sales of 1,037 units operated by the same 25 firms in September a year ago. Average sales per store were \$12,955 in September, 1942, 8 per cent greater than the \$11,977 average for the same month of 1941.

Sales increased by 14 per cent in the Prairie Provinces, 11 per cent in British Columbia and 3 per cent in Quebec over September, 1941. Ontario recorded a decline of less than 1 per cent.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for September, 1941 and 1942

	September, 1941		September, 1942		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA .....	1,037	12,420,076	989	12,812,665	+ 3.2
Quebec .....	192	2,506,401	180	2,578,450	+ 2.9
Ontario .....	553	6,954,379	529	6,901,876	- 0.8
Prairie Provinces ..	192	1,775,107	185	2,019,605	+13.8
British Columbia ..	100	1,184,189	95	1,312,734	+10.9



Independent Stores

Sales of 956 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 14 per cent higher in September of this year than last. Increases ranged from 7 to 22 per cent. Gains recorded for the provinces were as follows: Maritimes, 10 per cent; Quebec, 15 per cent; Ontario, 14 per cent; Manitoba, 12 per cent; Saskatchewan, 7 per cent; Alberta, 15 per cent; and British Columbia, 22 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported for September, 1941 and 1942

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA .....	956	763	+13.9
Maritimes .....	135	101	+10.3
Quebec .....	200	166	+14.9
Ontario .....	378	291	+13.5
Manitoba .....	65	54	+12.1
Saskatchewan .....	39	31	+ 6.5
Alberta .....	61	53	+15.0
British Columbia .....	78	67	+22.4

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