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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, SEPTEMBER, 1943

Indexes reflecting current trends in food distribution in Canada have been published for some years, indexes of retail and wholesale grocery sales 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 2 per cent in September of this year over September, 1942. Cumulative figures for the first nine months of the current year stand 3 per cent higher than for the corresponding period last year. Quebec and Ontario reported a decline in sales of 8 per cent and 1 per cent respectively, while gains reported for the other regions were as follows: Maritimes, 14 per cent; Prairies, 3 per cent; British Columbia, 7 per cent.

Inventories held by grocery wholesalers were valued 2 per cent lower at the end of September, 1943, 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, 1943. Stocks on hand at the beginning of September are normally 5 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Inventories on hand at the beginning of September this year were 6 per cent in excess of September sales, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of September, 1943, was slightly above the normal position for that period of the year.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per Cent Change		Year- to- date, 1943 1942
		September, 1942	September, 1943	September, 1942	September, 1943	
		\$	\$			
CANADA	72	20,570	20,935	+ 1.8	+ 7.8	+ 2.8
Maritimes	16	2,353	2,678	+13.8	+ 5.9	+ 9.5
Quebec	19	3,210	2,964	- 7.7	+ 8.1	+ 8.6
Ontario	19	6,429	6,364	- 1.0	+ 4.0	+ 5.0
Prairies	12	6,104	6,292	+ 3.1	+ 9.9	- 1.0
British Columbia ...	6	2,474	2,637	+ 6.6	+12.4	- 1.8

Retail Sales

Chain Stores

Sales of 868 chain store units operated by 22 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 2 per cent lower in September, 1943, than sales of 892 units operated by the same 22 firms in September a year ago. Average sales per store were \$13,904 in September, 1943, almost unchanged from the \$13,834 average for the same month of 1942.

Sales decreased by 5 per cent in Quebec, 2 per cent in Ontario, and 5 per cent in British Columbia, while the Prairie Provinces showed an increase of 4 per cent over September last year.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for September, 1942 and 1943

	September, 1942		September, 1943		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA	892	12,339,666	868	12,068,650	- 2.2
Quebec	180	2,578,450	172	2,453,237	- 4.9
Ontario	511	6,773,311	497	6,617,186	- 2.3
Prairie Provinces	106	1,674,816	105	1,746,719	+ 4.3
British Columbia	95	1,313,089	94	1,251,508	- 4.7

Independent Stores

Sales of 889 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores increased in dollar volume by 8 per cent in September, 1943, over the value of business transacted in the same month of last year. The increase was shared by all regions of the country except British Columbia, the following gains being recorded over September, 1942: Maritimes, 4 per cent; Quebec, 8 per cent; Ontario, 9 per cent; Manitoba, 8 per cent; Saskatchewan, 13 per cent and Alberta, 8 per cent. Sales were practically unchanged in British Columbia.

Comparison of Sales Reported for September, 1942 and 1943

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	889	646	+ 8.3
Maritimes	132	109	+11.4
Quebec	182	133	+ 8.2
Ontario	355	252	+ 8.6
Manitoba	58	43	+ 8.4
Saskatchewan	33	29	+12.6
Alberta	61	48	+ 8.4
British Columbia	68	32	- 0.4

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