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DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE  
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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, MAY, 1947

Indexes reflecting current trends in food distribution in Canada have been published for some years, indexes of retail grocery and wholesale grocery and fruits and vegetables sales forming components of the two regular monthly bulletins on retail and wholesale trade issued by the Merchandising and Services Statistics of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This series brings together in one report the information on retail grocery and wholesale grocery and fruit and vegetable 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

Wholesale grocers' sales in May, 1947 were 5 per cent higher in dollar volume than in May, 1946 and 3 per cent above April, 1947 according to statements received from 73 of the larger wholesalers across Canada. Sales in Quebec province increased 12 per cent over May, 1946 and in Ontario, 7 per cent. British Columbia and the Maritimes had sales 4 and 3 per cent higher respectively than in the same month a year ago, while the dollar volume in the Prairie Provinces remained practically unchanged. Cumulative sales for the first five months of 1947 were 13 per cent higher than in the corresponding period of 1946.

The dollar sales volume of wholesalers in the fruit and vegetable trade in May was 3 per cent below the May, 1946 volume but 27 per cent higher than in April, 1947. These results are based on statements received from 47 of the larger wholesale dealers across Canada. The different regions, however, showed varying trends. In the Maritimes and Quebec, fruit and vegetable wholesalers' sales were 6 per cent higher than in May a year ago. Decreases of 4 and 6 per cent in Ontario and the Western Provinces, however, more than offset this gain. The dollar volume of sales for the year to date was 8 per cent in excess of that for the corresponding period of 1946.

Stocks held by wholesale grocers at the end of May, 1947 were valued 38 per cent higher than stocks on hand at the end of May, 1946, but dropped 4 per cent from April, 1947. Inventories at the beginning of May are normally 26 per cent in excess of sales in that month. Stocks at the beginning of May this year were 14 per cent in excess of sales.

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Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		May, 1946	May, 1947	May, 1947 over May, 1946	April, 1947	Year-to- date, 1947 <u>Year-to- date, 1946</u>
		\$	\$			
CANADA .....	73	25,523	26,823	+ 5.1	+ 2.9	+13.3
Maritime Provinces ..	14	3,302	3,406	+ 3.2	- 5.5	+11.8
Quebec .....	20	3,589	4,035	+12.4	+18.6	+11.4
Ontario .....	22	8,286	8,888	+ 7.3	+ 4.4	+14.9
Prairie Provinces ...	11	6,635	6,623	- 0.2	+ 6.2	+11.5
British Columbia ....	6	3,711	3,871	+ 4.3	- 4.8	+16.5

Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		May, 1946	May, 1947	May, 1947 over May, 1946	April, 1947	Year-to- date, 1947 <u>Year-to- date, 1946</u>
		\$	\$			
CANADA .....	47	11,701	11,360	- 2.9	+27.2	- 7.9
Maritimes and Quebec	16	2,262	2,386	+ 5.5	+18.6	- 4.9
Ontario .....	18	4,850	4,657	- 4.0	+11.8	-10.3
Western Provinces ..	13	4,589	4,317	- 5.9	+16.4	- 7.1

Retail Trade

Chain Stores - May, 1947 sales of 880 chain store units operated by 27 chain companies in the food retailing field were 31 per cent higher than sales of 889 stores operated by the same 27 firms in May, 1946. Average sales per store in May, 1947 were \$26,160, 33 per cent above the \$19,710 average for the same month of the previous year.

The largest gain in chain food store sales occurred in Quebec province. Sales for the month of May, 1947 were 40 per cent higher than in the same month of last year. This gain was closely followed by increases of 37 per cent in the Maritime Provinces, and 35 per cent in Ontario. Considerably smaller, and yet fairly substantial, were gains recorded in the west, the Prairie Provinces showing an advance of 18 per cent and British Columbia, 12 per cent.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for May, 1946 and 1947

	May, 1946		May, 1947		% Change In Sales May, 1947 May, 1946
	No. of Stores	Sales \$	No. of Stores	Sales \$	
CANADA .....	889	17,522,400	880	23,020,400	+31.4
Maritime Provinces	32	481,700	32	659,100	+36.8
Quebec .....	164	3,684,100	164	5,145,000	+39.7
Ontario .....	496	9,320,800	490	12,560,100	+34.8
Prairie Provinces	103	2,221,000	101	2,630,200	+18.4
British Columbia .	94	1,814,800	93	2,026,000	+11.6

Independent Stores - Independent food stores did 11 per cent more business in May of this year than last. Very uniform gains were reported in all regions of the country ranging from 6 per cent in the Maritime Provinces to 13 per cent in Quebec and British Columbia.

Comparison of Sales Reported for May, 1946 and 1947

	No. of Stores Reporting	No. Reporting An Increase	% Change In Sales May, 1947 May, 1946
CANADA .....	1,164	843	+10.8
Maritime Provinces ...	164	92	+ 6.4
Quebec .....	265	202	+12.6
Ontario .....	368	280	+12.1
Manitoba .....	90	65	+ 8.3
Saskatchewan .....	66	44	+ 7.8
Alberta .....	95	67	+ 9.4
British Columbia .....	116	93	+12.7



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