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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, JULY, 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

Dollar volume of sales by wholesale grocers for July, 1947 was 18 per cent higher than for July, 1946 and 8 per cent above that for June, 1947. These figures are based on statements received from the larger wholesale houses across Canada. Due to delay in receipt of returns from Ontario, it has not been possible to publish reliable results for that province. It has also been necessary to withhold the dollar volume for Canada as a whole until a more complete coverage is obtained. Sales for the other regions registered the following increases over July, 1946: British Columbia, 27 per cent; Quebec, 22 per cent; Prairie Provinces, 17 per cent; and Maritime Provinces, 11 per cent. Cumulative sales for the first seven months of 1947 were 15 per cent higher than for the corresponding period of 1946.

Sales of wholesalers of fruits and vegetables in July, 1947 were 3 per cent below July, 1946 and 1 per cent higher than in June, 1947. Dollar volume of sales of fruits and vegetables in Ontario declined less than 1 per cent from last year, while there was a drop of 3 per cent in the Western Provinces and of 8 per cent in the Maritime Provinces and Quebec, combined. Wholesale sales of fruits and vegetables for the year to date were 6.5 per cent below the sales volume for the corresponding seven months of 1946.

Wholesale grocers' inventories were valued 31 per cent higher at the end of July this year compared with July 31, 1946 and were 4 per cent higher in value than at the end of June, 1947. Inventories at the beginning of July are normally 7 per cent in excess of sales during that month. Stocks in the hands of wholesale grocers at the beginning of July this year were valued 9 per cent below the sales volume for that month.

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Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		Year-to- date, 1947
		July, 1946	July, 1947	July, 1947 over July, 1946	June, 1947	Year-to- date, 1946
		\$	\$			
CANADA.....	(1)	(1)	(1)	+17.5	+ 7.9	+14.6
Maritime Provinces.	15	3,775	4,182	+10.8	+14.8	+11.2
Quebec.....	18	2,942	3,583	+21.8	+12.8	+15.0
Ontario.....	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
Prairie Provinces..	13	7,161	8,355	+16.7	+14.5	+12.5
British Columbia...	6	3,349	4,242	+26.6	- 5.0	+19.7

Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		Year-to- date, 1947
		July, 1946	July, 1947	July, 1947 over July, 1946	June, 1947	Year-to- date, 1946
		\$	\$			
CANADA.....	(1)	(1)	(1)	- 3.3	+ 0.8	- 6.5
Maritimes and Quebec	15	2,749	2,532	- 7.9	-30.2	- 9.4
Ontario.....	(1)	(1)	(1)	- 0.4	+ 8.2	- 7.3
Western Provinces...	12	5,735	5,572	- 2.8	+17.5	- 6.6

(1) Dollar volume not yet available due to insufficient coverage. Percentage changes based on below normal sample.

(2) Not yet available.

Retail Trade

Chain Stores - July, 1947 sales of 883 chain store units operated by 26 chain companies in the foot retailing field were 25 per cent higher than sales of 883 stores operated by the same 26 firms in July, 1946. Average sales per store in July, 1947 were \$24,639, 25 per cent above the \$19,651 average for the same month of the previous year.

Quebec experienced the largest gain in chain food store sales. An increase of 29 per cent in that province was closely followed by an advance of 28 per cent in Ontario. Gains ranging from 17 to 19 per cent occurred in the Maritime Provinces, Prairie Provinces and British Columbia.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for July, 1946 and 1947

	July, 1946		July, 1947		% Change In Sales July, 1947 July, 1946
	No. of Stores	Sales \$	No. of Stores	Sales \$	
CANADA.....	225	17,391,100	283	21,756,600	+25.1
Maritime Provinces.	43	648,700	44	771,200	+18.9
Quebec.....	164	3,625,500	164	4,661,800	+28.6
Ontario.....	479	9,265,100	477	11,814,200	+27.5
Prairie Provinces..	105	2,199,400	103	2,565,100	+16.6
British Columbia...	94	1,652,400	95	1,944,300	+17.7

Independent Stores - Independent food stores did 6 per cent more business in July this year than last. Sales in the Maritime Provinces and Saskatchewan were practically unchanged from last year, while all other regions reported gains which were close to the average increase for the country as a whole.

Comparison of Sales Reported for July, 1946 and 1947

	No. of Stores Reporting	No. Reporting An Increase	% Change in Sales July, 1947 July, 1946
CANADA.....	1,142	705	+6.0
Maritime Provinces.....	168	81	+0.6
Quebec.....	257	178	+8.0
Ontario.....	352	234	+7.8
Manitoba.....	88	47	+4.8
Saskatchewan.....	69	36	+0.9
Alberta.....	101	62	+5.8
British Columbia.....	107	67	+7.2

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