

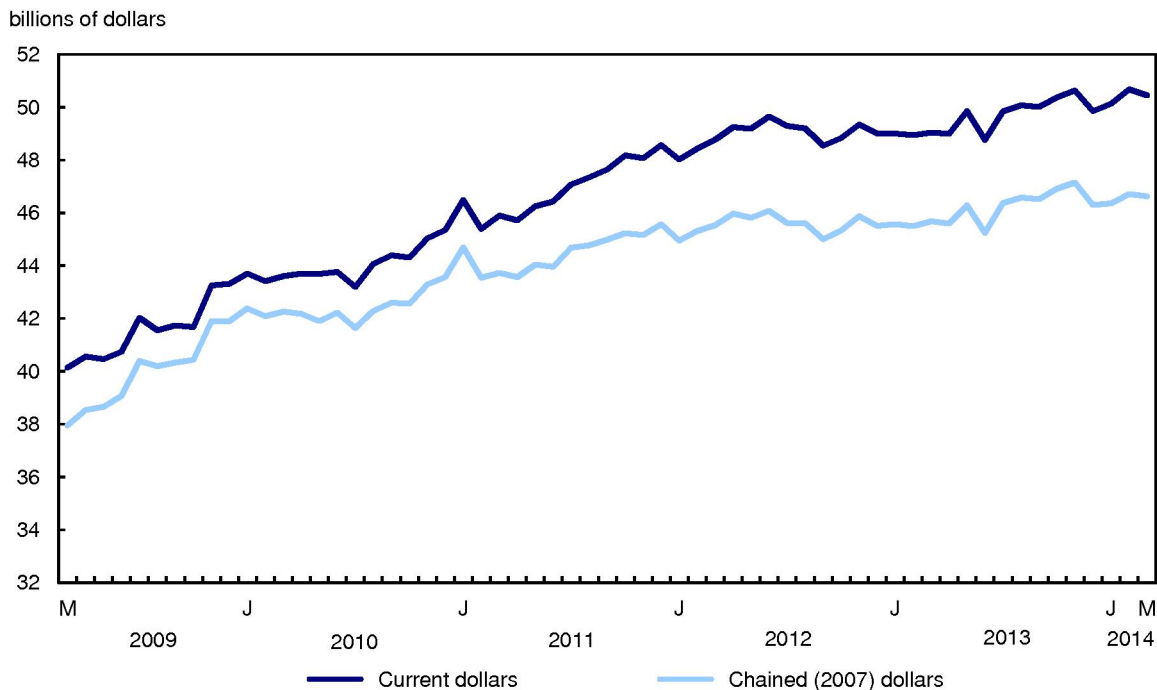
Wholesale trade, March 2014

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, May 20, 2014

Following two consecutive monthly gains, wholesale sales decreased 0.4% to \$50.5 billion in March. Lower sales were recorded in three of the seven subsectors, which together accounted for 51% of wholesale sales. The motor vehicle and parts subsector recorded the largest decline in March. Excluding this subsector, sales edged up 0.1% to \$42.3 billion.

In volume terms, wholesale sales were down 0.2%.

Chart 1
Wholesale sales decline in March



Lower sales in three subsectors drive decline

The motor vehicle and parts subsector recorded the largest decline in March, falling 3.0% to \$8.1 billion, the lowest level since September 2012. The motor vehicle industry (-4.4%) accounted for the decrease. Retail sales of motor vehicle and parts were flat in February.

Sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector declined 1.4% to \$10.6 billion, a third decrease in four months. The computer and communications equipment and supplies industry (-5.7%) accounted for most of the subsector's decline. Sales in this industry fell to the lowest level in nine months.

Lower sales were also recorded in the personal and household goods subsector, which fell 1.5% to \$7.2 billion as a result of lower sales in five of its six industries.

The food, beverage and tobacco subsector rose 1.2% to \$10.1 billion, the fifth increase in six months. All of the subsector's industries contributed to the gain, with the largest contribution coming from the food industry (+1.1%).



A fourth consecutive monthly increase was recorded in the miscellaneous subsector, which rose 1.7% to \$6.7 billion in March. All but one of the subsector's industries contributed to the increase.

In March, sales rose 0.7% to \$7.1 billion in the building material and supplies subsector, the third consecutive monthly increase. This month's level was the highest on record for the subsector.

Sales down in five provinces

In March, lower sales were recorded in five provinces, which together accounted for 60% of wholesale sales. Ontario was the largest contributor to the decline.

Ontario posted the largest decline in dollar terms in March, down 1.5% to \$24.0 billion. The decrease was Ontario's third in four months and more than offset the gain in February. The motor vehicle and parts subsector and the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector were the largest contributors to the decline.

Nova Scotia recorded a fifth consecutive monthly decline, with sales falling 4.7% to \$0.7 billion, the lowest level since July 2011. The decrease was widespread across subsectors.

Sales in Prince Edward Island decreased 9.2% to \$0.1 billion, the lowest level in six months. Lower sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector led the decline.

Saskatchewan registered a 3.5% increase as sales rose to \$2.1 billion, the highest level since May 2013. The gain was widespread across most subsectors and was led by the miscellaneous subsector.

Sales rose 3.2% to \$1.5 billion in Manitoba, the fourth increase in five months.

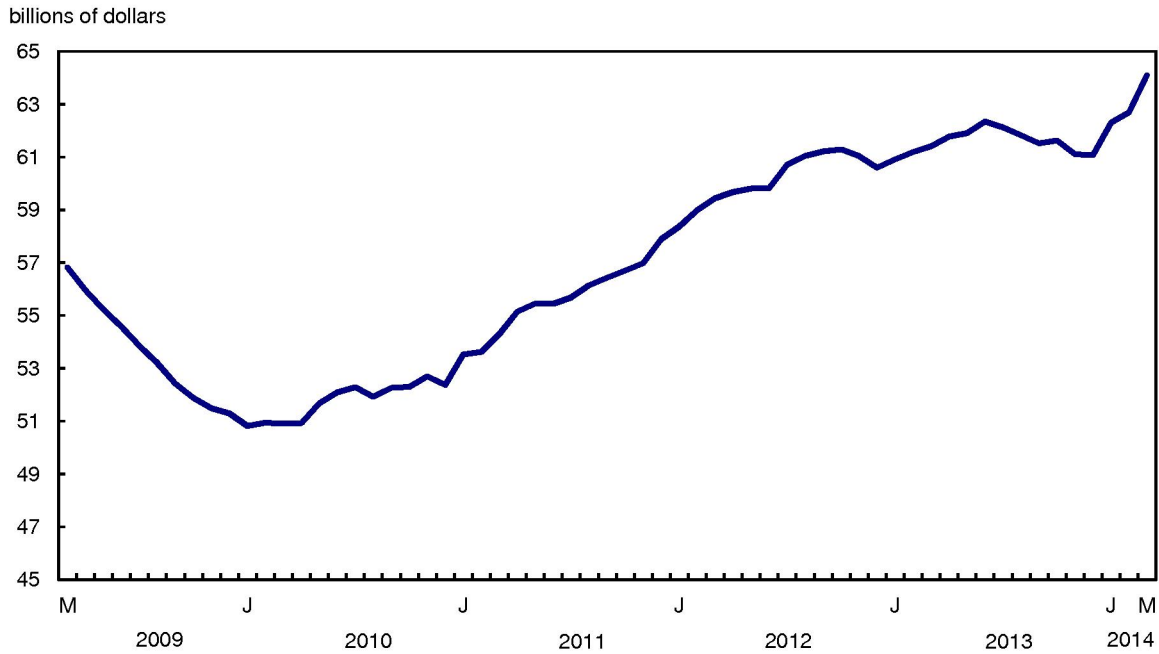
A third consecutive increase was recorded in Quebec, where sales rose 0.4% to \$9.5 billion. The food, beverage and tobacco subsector and the miscellaneous subsector accounted for most of the gain.

Sales in Newfoundland and Labrador grew 4.0% to \$0.4 billion on the strength of gains in the food, beverage and tobacco subsector and the miscellaneous subsector.

Inventories rise in March

Inventories recorded a third consecutive gain in March, rising 2.3% to \$64.1 billion, the highest level on record. Increases were recorded in five of seven subsectors, accounting for 91% of wholesale inventories.

Chart 2
Wholesale inventories increase in March



The largest increases in dollar terms were in the motor vehicle and parts subsector (+6.9%) and the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+1.7%), the third consecutive gain for both subsectors.

The building material and supplies subsector (+2.8%), the personal and household goods subsector (+1.3%), and the miscellaneous subsector (+0.9%) all recorded their third gain in four months.

The inventory-to-sales ratio rose from 1.24 in February to 1.27 in March. The inventory-to-sales ratio is a measure of the time in months required to exhaust inventories if sales were to remain at their current level.

Note to readers

All data in this release are seasonally adjusted and in current dollars, unless otherwise noted. For more information on seasonal adjustment, see "Seasonal adjustment and identifying economic trends."

Total wholesale sales expressed in volume are calculated by deflating current dollar values using relevant price indexes. The wholesale sales series in chained (2007) dollars is a chained Fisher volume index with 2007 as the reference year. For more information, see [Sales in volume for Wholesale Trade](#).

Data in volume terms were revised back to January 2013.

Table 1
Wholesale merchants' sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted

| | March 2013 | February 2014 ^r | March 2014 ^P | February to March 2014 | March 2013 to March 2014 |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| | millions of dollars | | | % change | |
| Total, wholesale sales (current dollars) | 49,044 | 50,680 | 50,454 | -0.4 | 2.9 |
| Total, wholesale sales (2007 chained dollars) | 45,676 | 46,717 | 46,628 | -0.2 | 2.1 |
| Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts | 40,641 | 42,319 | 42,344 | 0.1 | 4.2 |
| Farm product | 526 | 644 | 646 | 0.3 | 22.8 |
| Food, beverage and tobacco | 9,523 | 10,002 | 10,123 | 1.2 | 6.3 |
| Food | 8,554 | 8,999 | 9,101 | 1.1 | 6.4 |
| Beverage | 473 | 502 | 507 | 1.0 | 7.2 |
| Cigarette and tobacco product | 496 | 502 | 515 | 2.7 | 3.9 |
| Personal and household goods | 6,868 | 7,346 | 7,233 | -1.5 | 5.3 |
| Textile, clothing and footwear | 894 | 958 | 942 | -1.7 | 5.4 |
| Home entertainment equipment and household appliance | 690 | 809 | 757 | -6.4 | 9.8 |
| Home furnishings | 458 | 470 | 465 | -0.9 | 1.5 |
| Personal goods | 708 | 753 | 705 | -6.3 | -0.4 |
| Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies | 3,429 | 3,660 | 3,688 | 0.8 | 7.5 |
| Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries | 689 | 697 | 676 | -3.0 | -1.9 |
| Motor vehicle and parts | 8,403 | 8,362 | 8,110 | -3.0 | -3.5 |
| Motor vehicle | 6,401 | 6,107 | 5,840 | -4.4 | -8.8 |
| New motor vehicle parts and accessories | 1,951 | 2,201 | 2,214 | 0.6 | 13.5 |
| Used motor vehicle parts and accessories | 51 | 54 | 56 | 3.6 | 9.1 |
| Building material and supplies | 6,915 | 7,053 | 7,102 | 0.7 | 2.7 |
| Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies | 2,163 | 2,141 | 2,214 | 3.4 | 2.4 |
| Metal service centres | 1,488 | 1,633 | 1,622 | -0.7 | 9.0 |
| Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies | 3,264 | 3,279 | 3,266 | -0.4 | 0.1 |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies | 10,307 | 10,713 | 10,568 | -1.4 | 2.5 |
| Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment | 1,264 | 1,355 | 1,346 | -0.7 | 6.5 |
| Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies | 3,587 | 3,615 | 3,632 | 0.5 | 1.3 |
| Computer and communications equipment and supplies | 3,021 | 3,377 | 3,184 | -5.7 | 5.4 |
| Other machinery, equipment and supplies | 2,435 | 2,366 | 2,406 | 1.7 | -1.2 |
| Miscellaneous | 6,502 | 6,561 | 6,671 | 1.7 | 2.6 |
| Recyclable material | 606 | 718 | 727 | 1.2 | 19.9 |
| Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product | 880 | 900 | 945 | 5.0 | 7.4 |
| Agricultural supplies | 2,065 | 1,851 | 1,877 | 1.4 | -9.1 |
| Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product | 1,117 | 1,229 | 1,227 | -0.2 | 9.9 |
| Other miscellaneous | 1,834 | 1,862 | 1,896 | 1.8 | 3.4 |

^r revised

^P preliminary

Note(s): Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Table 2
Wholesale merchants' sales by province and territory – Seasonally adjusted

| | March 2013 | February 2014 ^r | March 2014 ^P | February to March 2014 | March 2013 to March 2014 |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | millions of dollars | | | % change | |
| Canada | 49,044 | 50,680 | 50,454 | -0.4 | 2.9 |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 362 | 403 | 420 | 4.0 | 15.9 |
| Prince Edward Island | 50 | 61 | 56 | -9.2 | 10.8 |
| Nova Scotia | 683 | 683 | 651 | -4.7 | -4.6 |
| New Brunswick | 473 | 504 | 504 | -0.1 | 6.4 |
| Quebec | 9,391 | 9,459 | 9,502 | 0.4 | 1.2 |
| Ontario | 23,502 | 24,382 | 24,014 | -1.5 | 2.2 |
| Manitoba | 1,286 | 1,405 | 1,451 | 3.2 | 12.8 |
| Saskatchewan | 2,139 | 2,041 | 2,111 | 3.5 | -1.3 |
| Alberta | 6,358 | 6,815 | 6,827 | 0.2 | 7.4 |
| British Columbia | 4,714 | 4,837 | 4,829 | -0.2 | 2.4 |
| Yukon | 13 | 12 | 12 | -3.9 | -8.3 |
| Northwest Territories | 62 | 69 | 70 | 1.6 | 13.1 |
| Nunavut | 11 | 9 | 9 | -1.2 | -16.9 |

^r revised

^P preliminary

Note(s): Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Table 3
Wholesale merchants' inventories by industry – Seasonally adjusted

| | March 2013 | February 2014 ^r | March 2014 ^P | February to March 2014 | March 2013 to March 2014 |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | millions of dollars | | | % change | |
| Total, wholesale inventories | 61,412 | 62,697 | 64,108 | 2.3 | 4.4 |
| Farm product | 168 | 260 | 250 | -4.0 | 48.8 |
| Food, beverage and tobacco | 5,454 | 5,598 | 5,591 | -0.1 | 2.5 |
| Food | 4,924 | 4,998 | 5,003 | 0.1 | 1.6 |
| Beverage | 310 | 354 | 346 | -2.4 | 11.5 |
| Cigarette and tobacco product | 220 | 246 | 241 | -1.8 | 9.7 |
| Personal and household goods | 10,338 | 10,981 | 11,126 | 1.3 | 7.6 |
| Textile, clothing and footwear | 1,819 | 1,961 | 1,945 | -0.8 | 6.9 |
| Home entertainment equipment and household appliance | 786 | 803 | 828 | 3.1 | 5.5 |
| Home furnishings | 999 | 1,197 | 1,231 | 2.8 | 23.2 |
| Personal goods | 1,454 | 1,305 | 1,395 | 6.9 | -4.1 |
| Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies | 4,584 | 4,933 | 4,958 | 0.5 | 8.2 |
| Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries | 696 | 781 | 769 | -1.6 | 10.4 |
| Motor vehicle and parts | 8,323 | 8,299 | 8,872 | 6.9 | 6.6 |
| Motor vehicle | 4,387 | 4,565 | 4,917 | 7.7 | 12.1 |
| New motor vehicle parts and accessories | 3,829 | 3,620 | 3,839 | 6.1 | 0.3 |
| Used motor vehicle parts and accessories | 108 | 115 | 116 | 1.7 | 8.3 |
| Building material and supplies | 11,681 | 11,183 | 11,502 | 2.8 | -1.5 |
| Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies | 3,204 | 3,003 | 2,982 | -0.7 | -6.9 |
| Metal service centres | 3,437 | 3,221 | 3,235 | 0.4 | -5.9 |
| Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies | 5,040 | 4,959 | 5,285 | 6.6 | 4.9 |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies | 17,981 | 18,431 | 18,753 | 1.7 | 4.3 |
| Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment | 3,936 | 4,168 | 4,354 | 4.5 | 10.6 |
| Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies | 9,000 | 9,109 | 9,094 | -0.2 | 1.0 |
| Computer and communications equipment and supplies | 1,646 | 1,621 | 1,662 | 2.5 | 0.9 |
| Other machinery, equipment and supplies | 3,398 | 3,534 | 3,644 | 3.1 | 7.2 |
| Miscellaneous | 7,466 | 7,944 | 8,015 | 0.9 | 7.3 |
| Recyclable material | 483 | 529 | 480 | -9.2 | -0.5 |
| Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product | 678 | 710 | 715 | 0.6 | 5.5 |
| Agricultural supplies | 2,893 | 3,125 | 3,182 | 1.8 | 10.0 |
| Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product | 986 | 1,031 | 1,085 | 5.2 | 10.0 |
| Other miscellaneous | 2,427 | 2,548 | 2,554 | 0.2 | 5.2 |

^r revised

^P preliminary

Note(s): Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Available in CANSIM: tables 081-0011, 081-0012 and 081-0015.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2401.

The March 2014 issue of *Wholesale Trade* (63-008-X) will soon be available.

Wholesale trade data for April will be released on June 18.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca).

For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Elspeth Hazell (613-951-8090; elspeth.hazell@statcan.gc.ca), Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade Division.