

Wholesale trade, February 2016

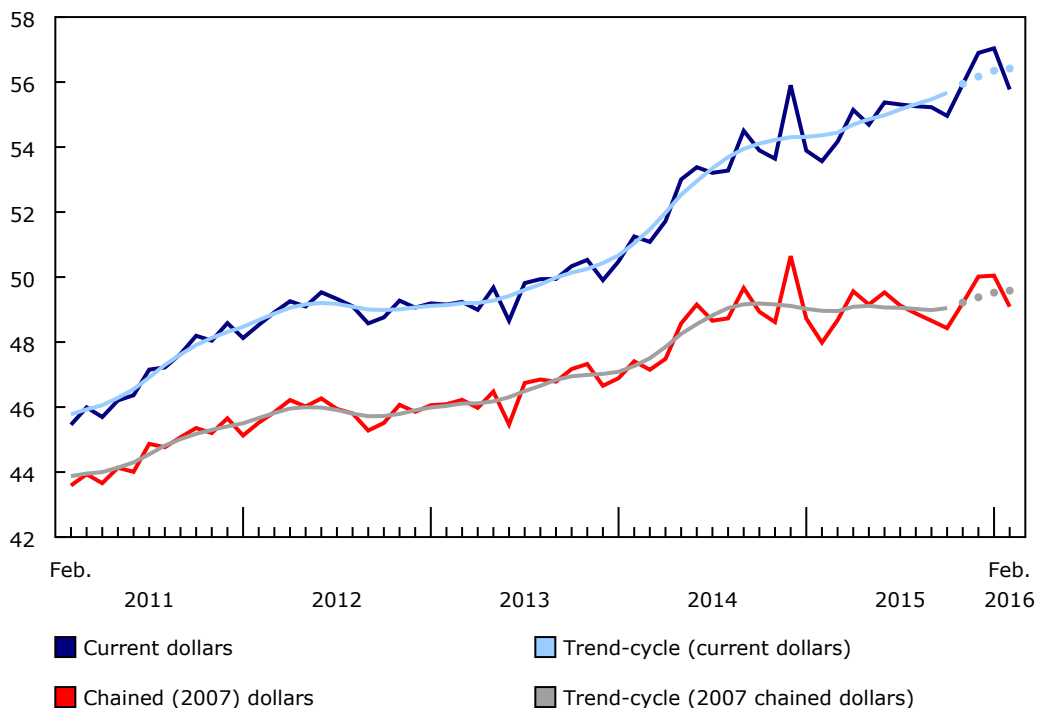
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Wholesale sales decreased 2.2% to \$55.8 billion in February after three consecutive increases. Lower sales were recorded in five of seven subsectors, accounting for 66% of total wholesale sales.

In volume terms, wholesale sales declined 1.9%.

Chart 1
Wholesale sales decrease in February

billions of dollars



Source(s): CANSIM tables [081-0011](#) and [081-0015](#).

Lower sales in five subsectors

The machinery, equipment and supplies subsector recorded the largest decline in dollar terms in February, decreasing 4.8% to \$11.0 billion and more than offsetting the 4.1% gain in January. Every industry within the subsector recorded lower sales, led by the construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies industry (-11.5%). Decreases in exports and imports of industrial machinery, equipment and parts, and manufacturing sales of machinery were also recorded in February.

In the motor vehicle and parts subsector, sales decreased 3.5% to \$10.4 billion, their lowest level in three months. All three industries in the subsector declined, led by the motor vehicle industry, down 3.6% to \$8.0 billion, a second consecutive decrease. In February, there were lower imports and exports of motor vehicles and parts as well as lower sales by motor vehicle assembly plants.

Following a 2.5% increase in January, sales in the miscellaneous subsector declined 4.0% to \$7.1 billion. The other miscellaneous industry (-7.7%) and the agricultural supplies industry (-6.1%) contributed to the decline.



In the building material and supplies subsector, sales decreased 1.8% to \$7.6 billion, their lowest level since October 2015. The electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies industry contributed the most to the decline, decreasing 4.8% to \$2.3 billion in February.

The personal and household goods subsector rose 1.4% to \$7.9 billion on the strength of gains in the pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies industry (+2.9%), following two months of declines for the industry.

Sales decline in all but one province

Lower sales were recorded in nine provinces in February, led by Ontario and Saskatchewan.

In Ontario, sales declined for a second consecutive month, down 1.2% to \$28.6 billion. The motor vehicle and parts subsector and the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector contributed the most to the decrease.

Sales in Saskatchewan fell 12.8% to \$2.1 billion, their lowest level since August 2014. Declines were widespread across subsectors in this province, with the miscellaneous subsector being the largest contributor.

In Alberta, sales decreased 3.4% to \$6.2 billion on widespread declines across subsectors. This second consecutive monthly decline brought sales in the province to their lowest level since September 2011.

Sales in Quebec decreased 1.6% to \$10.1 billion, following six months of increases. Declines were recorded in a majority of the subsectors, with the miscellaneous subsector contributing the most to the decline.

Following a 3.9% gain in January, sales in British Columbia decreased 2.6% to \$5.5 billion. The building material and supplies subsector led the decline.

Sales in Manitoba decreased 3.8% to \$1.4 billion as the miscellaneous subsector and the motor vehicle and parts subsector led the declines.

Sales in the motor vehicle and parts subsector contributed the most to the decline in Nova Scotia, down 1.1% to \$811 million.

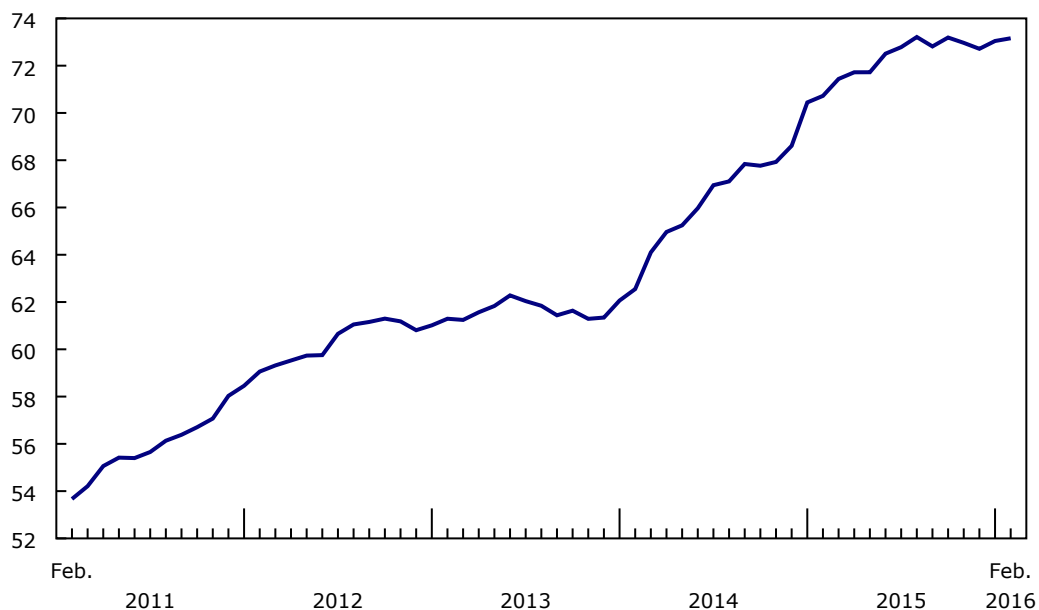
Newfoundland and Labrador was the only province with higher sales in February. Following three consecutive declines, sales in this province were up 1.7% to \$349 million, on the strength of higher sales in the food, beverage and tobacco subsector.

Inventories increase in February

Inventories rose 0.2% to \$73.2 billion in February. Gains were recorded in three of seven subsectors, which together represented 61% of wholesale inventories.

Chart 2
Wholesale inventories increase in February

billions of dollars



Source(s): CANSIM table [081-0012](#).

In dollar terms, the largest gain was in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+0.8%), its second consecutive increase.

The personal and household goods subsector (+0.2%) recorded a third consecutive gain, while the motor vehicle and parts subsector (+0.2%) increased for the first time in three months.

Inventories decreased 0.3% in the building material and supplies subsector, a second consecutive decline.

After reaching their highest levels on record in January, inventories declined in the food, beverage and tobacco subsector (-0.4%) and the miscellaneous subsector (-0.2%).

The inventory-to-sales ratio rose from 1.28 in January to 1.31 in February. This 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 expressed in current dollars, unless otherwise noted. For information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

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](#).

The Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey covers all industries within the wholesale trade sector as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), with the exception of oilseed and grain merchant wholesalers (NAICS 41112), petroleum and petroleum products merchant wholesalers (NAICS 412), and business-to-business electronic markets, and agents and brokers (NAICS 419).

For information on trend-cycle data, see the [StatCan Blog](#) and [Trend-cycle estimates – Frequently asked questions](#).

Real-time CANSIM tables

Real-time CANSIM tables 081-8011, 081-8012 and 081-8015 will be updated on April 27. For more information, consult the document [Real-time CANSIM tables](#).

Next release

Wholesale trade data for March will be released on May 19.

Table 1
Wholesale merchants' sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	February 2015	January 2016 ^r	February 2016 ^p	January to February 2016	February 2015 to February 2016
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)	53,565	57,037	55,773	-2.2	4.1
Total, wholesale sales (2007 chained dollars)	47,983	50,044	49,089	-1.9	2.3
Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts	44,738	46,210	45,330	-1.9	1.3
Farm product	744	666	630	-5.4	-15.4
Food, beverage and tobacco	10,512	10,939	10,982	0.4	4.5
Food	9,475	9,881	9,915	0.3	4.6
Beverage	499	543	543	-0.0	8.7
Cigarette and tobacco product	537	515	524	1.7	-2.5
Personal and household goods	7,557	7,837	7,947	1.4	5.2
Textile, clothing and footwear	984	1,003	989	-1.4	0.5
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	755	789	814	3.2	7.8
Home furnishings	513	561	564	0.7	10.0
Personal goods	773	742	730	-1.6	-5.6
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	3,849	4,021	4,137	2.9	7.5
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	682	721	712	-1.2	4.4
Motor vehicle and parts	8,827	10,826	10,443	-3.5	18.3
Motor vehicle	6,304	8,251	7,958	-3.6	26.2
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,473	2,525	2,436	-3.5	-1.5
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	50	50	49	-1.5	-2.1
Building material and supplies	7,408	7,759	7,618	-1.8	2.8
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	2,308	2,423	2,307	-4.8	-0.0
Metal service centres	1,555	1,398	1,396	-0.2	-10.2
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	3,545	3,937	3,914	-0.6	10.4
Machinery, equipment and supplies	11,165	11,584	11,023	-4.8	-1.3
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	1,355	1,361	1,291	-5.2	-4.8
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	3,683	3,903	3,456	-11.5	-6.2
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	3,625	3,658	3,648	-0.3	0.7
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	2,502	2,662	2,628	-1.3	5.0
Miscellaneous	7,353	7,426	7,131	-4.0	-3.0
Recyclable material	771	606	629	3.8	-18.3
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	983	991	985	-0.5	0.2
Agricultural supplies	2,219	2,308	2,167	-6.1	-2.3
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,324	1,322	1,320	-0.2	-0.3
Other miscellaneous	2,056	2,199	2,030	-7.7	-1.3

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

Source(s): CANSIM tables [081-0011](#) and [081-0015](#).

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

	February 2015	January 2016 ^r	February 2016 ^p	January to February 2016	February 2015 to February 2016
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	53,565	57,037	55,773	-2.2	4.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	426	343	349	1.7	-18.1
Prince Edward Island	60	62	59	-5.4	-2.3
Nova Scotia	743	819	811	-1.1	9.1
New Brunswick	537	547	545	-0.5	1.5
Quebec	9,690	10,315	10,150	-1.6	4.7
Ontario	25,891	28,975	28,620	-1.2	10.5
Manitoba	1,516	1,491	1,433	-3.8	-5.4
Saskatchewan	2,419	2,406	2,097	-12.8	-13.3
Alberta	6,955	6,404	6,188	-3.4	-11.0
British Columbia	5,262	5,602	5,455	-2.6	3.7
Yukon	10	12	13	3.8	28.3
Northwest Territories	49	51	45	-12.8	-8.2
Nunavut	8	9	9	3.2	15.8

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

Source(s): CANSIM table [081-0011](#).

Table 3
Wholesale merchants' inventories by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	February 2015	January 2016 ^r	February 2016 ^p	January to February 2016	February 2015 to February 2016
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale inventories	70,722	73,044	73,159	0.2	3.4
Farm product	294 ^E	243 ^E	242 ^E	-0.5	-17.9
Food, beverage and tobacco	6,366	6,627	6,600	-0.4	3.7
Food	5,780	6,006	5,993	-0.2	3.7
Beverage	349	383	380	-0.8	8.8
Cigarette and tobacco product	237	237	226	-4.7	-4.5
Personal and household goods	12,132	13,360	13,382	0.2	10.3
Textile, clothing and footwear	2,101	2,460	2,470	0.4	17.6
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	813	892	885	-0.8	8.8
Home furnishings	1,237 ^E	1,310	1,319	0.7	6.7
Personal goods	1,443	1,644	1,573	-4.3	9.0
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	5,830	6,258	6,345	1.4	8.8
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	707	796	791	-0.7	11.9
Motor vehicle and parts	9,542	10,520	10,541	0.2	10.5
Motor vehicle	5,360	5,864	5,887	0.4	9.8
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	4,073	4,564	4,562	-0.0	12.0
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	109	92	93	1.2	-14.8
Building material and supplies	12,930	12,020	11,978	-0.3	-7.4
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	3,381	3,259	3,302	1.3	-2.3
Metal service centres	3,854	3,140	3,079	-1.9	-20.1
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	5,695	5,621	5,597	-0.4	-1.7
Machinery, equipment and supplies	20,323	20,772	20,937	0.8	3.0
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	4,429	4,583	4,618	0.8	4.3
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	10,177	10,308	10,417	1.1	2.4
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	1,966	1,972	1,978	0.3	0.6
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	3,752	3,908	3,924	0.4	4.6
Miscellaneous	9,135	9,503	9,479	-0.2	3.8
Recyclable material	591	451	446 ^E	-1.0	-24.5
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	792	846	855	1.1	8.0
Agricultural supplies	3,825	4,054	3,983	-1.7	4.1
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,334	1,377	1,353	-1.7	1.5
Other miscellaneous	2,593	2,775	2,841	2.4	9.6

^r revised

^p preliminary

^E use with caution

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

Source(s): CANSIM table [081-0012](#).

Available in CANSIM: tables [081-0011](#), [081-0012](#) and [081-0015](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2401](#).

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