

Control and sale of alcoholic beverages, year ending March 31, 2018

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, April 23, 2019

It was another grape year for wine sales in 2017/2018, while beer sales were relatively flat.

During the fiscal year 2017/2018, wine sales grew 4.6% to \$7.5 billion, while beer sales rose 0.8% to \$9.2 billion. In terms of market share, wine sales increased 0.4% to account for 32.4% of total alcoholic beverage sales, while beer sales decreased 0.9% to 39.7%.

In total, liquor stores, agencies and other retail outlets sold \$23.2 billion worth of alcoholic beverages, up 3.1% from the previous year.

Net income and other government revenue derived from the control and sale of alcoholic beverages, including excise taxes, retail sales taxes, specific taxes on alcohol, and licence and permit revenues, increased 2.0% from the previous fiscal year to \$12.2 billion in 2017/2018.

The total volume of alcohol sold reached 3,098 million litres, equivalent to 507.1 standard drinks per person over the legal drinking age in Canada.

Larger than usual changes in the sale of alcohol occurred in Nunavut in 2017/2018. Beer sales increased 76.6% to \$5.7 million, wine sales rose 278.6% to \$2.3 million and sales of spirits declined 12.4% to \$1.3 million. These changes reflected the opening of the Iqaluit Beer and Wine Store, the first alcohol retail store in Nunavut. Prior to the opening of this store, much of Nunavut's liquor was purchased outside of the territory through import permits. The Nunavut Liquor Commission has seen a decrease in import permits following the opening of the new retail store.

Beer sales are relatively flat

Liquor stores, agencies and other retail outlets sold \$9.2 billion worth of beer during the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018, up 0.8% from the previous year.

Canadian beer sales increased 0.7%, while imported beer sales rose 1.1%. Beer accounted for the largest market share of total alcoholic beverage sales in Nunavut (60.7%) and the lowest share in British Columbia (34.0%).

The average annual growth rate of total beer sales over the past 10 years was 1.0%. Sales of Canadian beer grew at an annual average rate of 0.8% over the past decade, while imported beer sales increased, on average, by 2.5% annually.

In terms of volume, liquor stores, agencies and other retail outlets sold 2,215 million litres of beer in 2017/2018, down 0.8% from 2016/2017. This volume is equivalent to 220.6 bottles of beer sold per person over the legal drinking age in Canada (1 bottle = 341 ml, 5% alcohol content).

Wine sales continue to grow

Liquor stores, agencies and other retail outlets sold \$7.5 billion worth of wine during the year ending March 31, 2018, up 4.6% from the previous fiscal year.

Every province and territory reported higher wine sales. Sales of Canadian wine rose by 5.5%, while sales of imported wine grew by 4.2%.

The average annual growth rate of total wine sales over the past 10 years was 4.2%. Sales of Canadian wine grew at an annual average rate of 4.7% over the past decade, while imported wine sales increased, on average, by 4.0% annually.



Wine accounted for the largest market share in Quebec at 43.8% of total sales of alcoholic beverages, while the lowest share was in Saskatchewan (15.2%). Red wines accounted for 52.8% of total wine sales in Canada in 2017/2018, followed by white wines (32.2%) and sparkling wines (5.9%). Rosé, fortified and other wines accounted for the remaining wine sales.

In terms of volume, wine sales increased 4.9% to 531 million litres in 2017/2018. This volume is equivalent to 25.6 bottles of wine sold per person over the legal drinking age in Canada (1 bottle = 750 ml, 12% alcohol content).

Spirit sales rise

Liquor stores, agencies, and other retail outlets sold \$5.5 billion worth of spirits during the year ending March 31, 2018, up 4.4% from the previous fiscal year. Spirits accounted for 23.7% of total alcohol sales in 2017/2018, up from 23.4% in 2016/2017.

Spirit sales had the largest market share in the Northwest Territories at 40.2% of total alcoholic beverage sales, and the lowest in Nunavut (13.6%). Overall, sales of Canadian spirits increased 0.3%, while sales of imported spirits rose 8.5%.

At the national level, whisky (30.2%), vodka (24.9%) and rum (16.3%) were the most popular spirits sold in Canada in 2017/2018, accounting for 71.4% of total spirit sales. At the provincial/territorial level, whisky had the largest market share of spirit sales in Manitoba (37.2%) and the lowest in the Northwest Territories (15.1%). Vodka had the largest proportion of spirit sales in Nunavut (58.0%) and the lowest in Newfoundland and Labrador (16.0%). Rum was the top choice for spirits in Newfoundland and Labrador (44.4% of spirit sales), while the lowest proportion sold was in the Northwest Territories (12.0%).

The average annual growth rate of spirit sales over the last 10 years was 2.8%. Canadian spirit sales grew at an annual average rate of 0.7% over the past decade, compared with an annual average growth rate of 5.1% for imported spirits.

In terms of volume, spirits sold increased 2.0% to 171.9 million litres in 2017/2018, equivalent to 7.4 bottles of spirits sold per person over the legal drinking age in Canada (1 bottle = 750 ml, 40% alcohol content). Sales of Canadian spirits totalled 91.0 million litres in 2017/2018, down 1.2% from 2016/2017. The volume of imported spirits sold increased by 5.9% to 81.0 million litres.

Ciders, coolers, and other refreshment beverages: Small market share but with sustained and dynamic growth

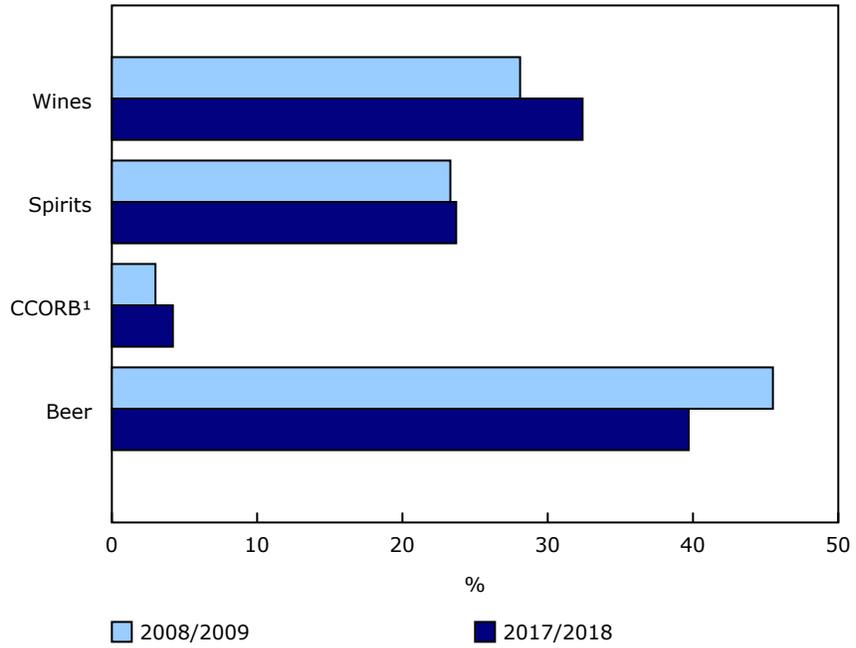
Liquor stores, agencies and other retail outlets sold \$1.0 billion worth of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages in 2017/2018, up 7.2% from the previous fiscal year. Ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages accounted for 4.2% of total sales of alcohol in 2017/2018, up from 4.0% in 2016/2017.

Sales of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages had the largest market share in New Brunswick at 6.8% of total sales of alcoholic beverages, and the lowest share in Nunavut (0.9%).

The average annual growth rate of total ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages sales over the last 10 years was 6.3%, outpacing the sales growth of wine (+4.2%), spirits (+2.8%) and beer (+1.0%). Canadian ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages sales grew at an annual average rate of 5.5%, while imported sales of these beverages increased at an annual average rate of 10.2%.

In terms of volume, liquor stores, agencies and other retail outlets sold 181 million litres of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages in 2017/2018, up 8.5% from the previous year. This volume is equivalent to 21.5 bottles of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages sold per person over the legal drinking age in Canada (1 bottle = 341 ml, 5% alcohol content).

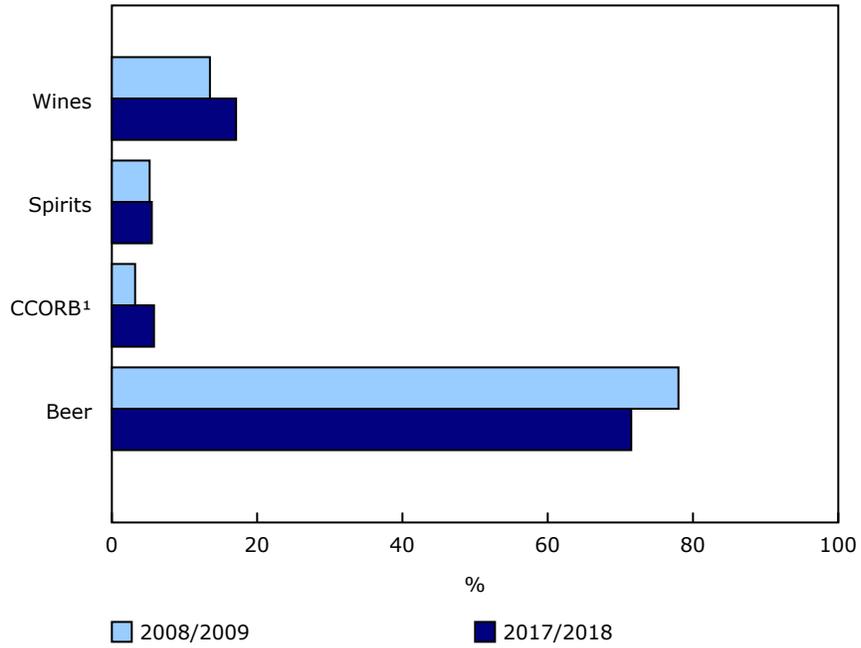
Chart 1
Proportion of sales (in dollars) of alcoholic beverages, by category



1. Ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages.

Source(s): Table 10-10-0010-01.

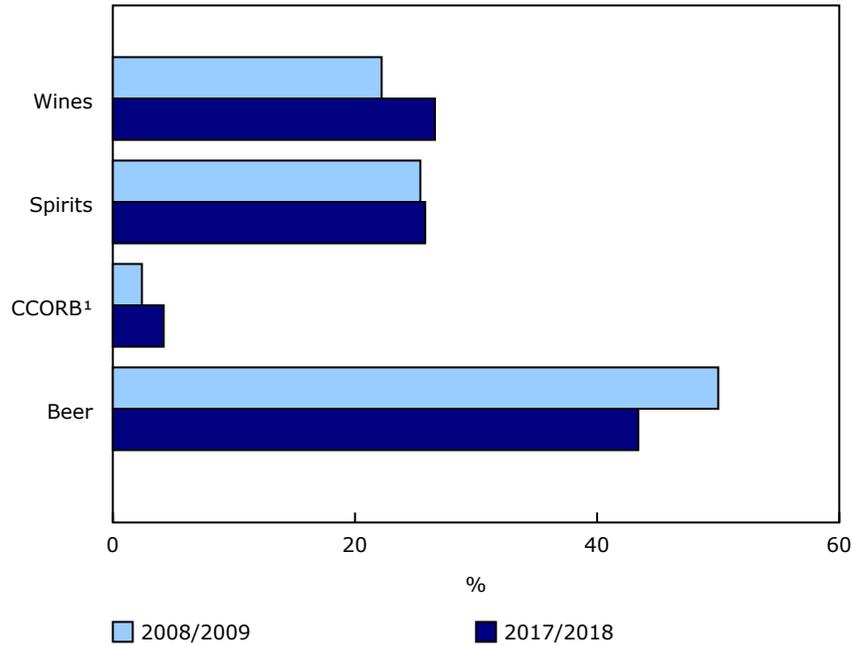
Chart 2
Proportion of sales (in volume) of alcoholic beverages, by category



1. Ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages.

Source(s): Table 10-10-0010-01.

Chart 3
Proportion of sales (in absolute volume, or pure alcohol) of alcoholic beverages, by category



1. Ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages.

Source(s): Table 10-10-0010-01.

Note to readers

Comparability and limitations of the data

Statistics on sales of alcoholic beverages by volume should not be equated with data on consumption. Sales volumes include only sales as reported by the liquor authorities and their agencies, including sales by wineries, breweries, and other outlets that operate under license from the liquor authorities. Consumption of alcoholic beverages would include all of these sales, as well as any unreported volumes of alcohol sold through ferment-on-premise operations or other outlets, and any unrecorded or illegal transactions. Statistics on sales of alcoholic beverages by dollar value should not be equated with consumer expenditures on alcoholic beverages. The sales data refer to the revenues received by liquor authorities and their agents, and a portion of these revenues include sales to licensed establishments such as bars and restaurants.

The value of sales of alcoholic beverages excludes all sales taxes, the value of returnable containers, and deposits. Absolute volume of sales of alcoholic beverages is calculated by multiplying the sales volume by the percentage of alcohol content for each product category.

Standard drink

According to Health Canada guidelines, a standard drink is defined as a 341 mL (12 oz.) beer, cooler, or cider with 5% alcohol content, a 142 mL (5 oz.) glass of wine with 12% alcohol content, or a 43 mL (1.5 oz.) spirit drink with 40% alcohol.

Available tables: [10-10-0010-01](#) to [10-10-0013-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [1726](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).