

Wholesale trade, May 2022

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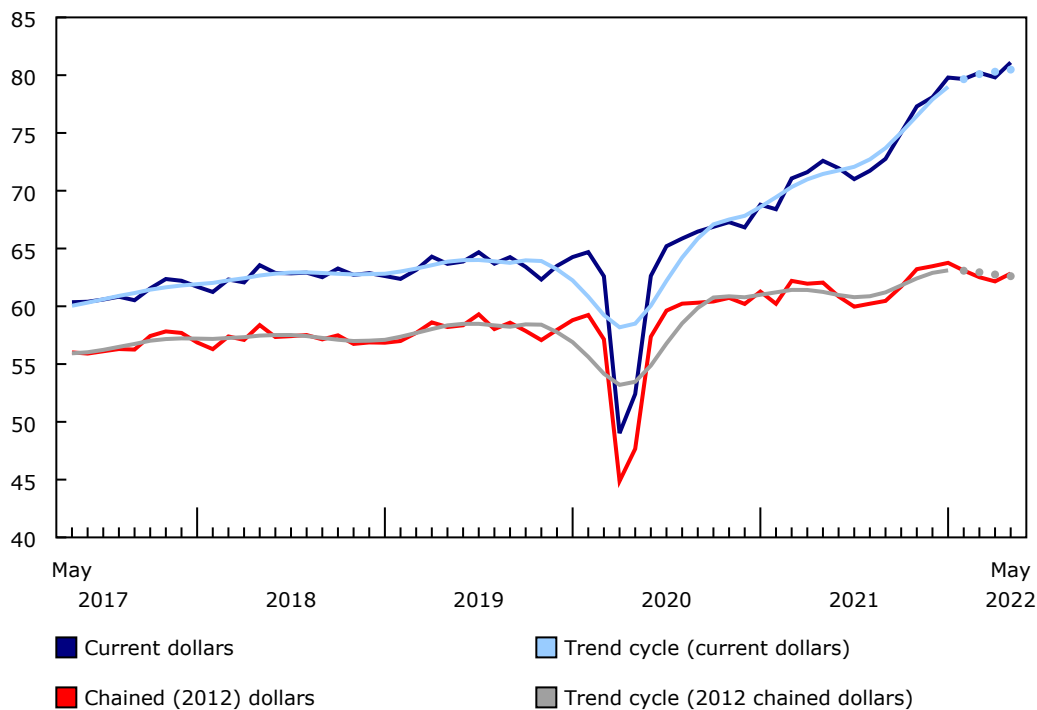
Wholesale sales rise in May

Wholesale sales rose 1.6% in May to \$81.1 billion, the eighth increase in the past ten months. Sales increased in five of the seven wholesale trade subsectors, representing 70% of wholesale sales. The growth was predominantly due to higher sales in the food, beverage and tobacco subsector and the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector.

Constant dollar sales rose 1.1% in May.

Chart 1
Wholesale sales increase in May

billions of dollars



Note(s): The higher variability associated with the trend-cycle estimates is indicated on the chart, with a dotted line for the current reference month and the previous three months. For more information, see the Note to readers.

Source(s): Tables [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0003-01](#).

Sales of food, beverage and tobacco lead May increase

Sales in the food, beverage and tobacco subsector increased 7.8% to \$14.7 billion in May, the fourth increase in the last five months. This is the highest level recorded for the subsector. All four component industries posted gains for the month, but the food industry led the gains, increasing 8.7% to \$13.2 billion. The growth was driven by volumes as constant dollar sales in the subsector rose 8.4% in May.



The machinery, equipment and supplies subsector posted the second highest gains for May as sales rose 3.2% to \$17.0 billion. This was the eighth month-over-month increase in the past nine months. Higher sales in two of the four industries produced the gains for the month. The farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment industry increased 17.2% to \$2.3 billion, and the computer and communications equipment and supplies industry was up 6.5% to \$5.4 billion.

Sales of building material and supplies continued to fall for a second consecutive month in May, down 4.3% to \$13.2 billion—the third decline in 2022. An 8.2% drop in sales of the lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies industry accounted for nearly all of the decrease in the subsector. Compared with May 2021, sales in this industry were 15.3% lower, reflecting a drop in the price of lumber and other sawmill products.

Ontario leads provincial gains

Higher sales were reported in seven provinces and two territories in May, accounting for 89% of the national value, with Ontario gaining the most.

In Ontario, sales grew 1.8% to \$40.9 billion in May, with higher sales in four of seven subsectors. Higher sales were led by the food, beverage, and tobacco subsector, up 8.8% to \$6.7 billion, predominantly due to gains in the food industry. Also contributing to the gains in Ontario was the miscellaneous subsector, up 5.3%, and the 1.5% increase in the machinery equipment and supplies subsector. Sales of building material and supplies fell for the second consecutive month, and were down 4.3% in May to \$5.2 billion on falling lumber prices.

Sales in Quebec increased by 1.5% to \$15.0 billion, with four of seven subsectors showing an increase in sales. The food, beverage and tobacco subsector also led the gains in Quebec, with an increase of 13.2% to \$3.3 billion. Sales in all component industries rose, with the majority of the gains seen in the food industry, up 13.8%.

Sales in Saskatchewan rose by 4.0% to \$3.6 billion, with higher sales in five of seven subsectors. The machinery, equipment and supplies subsector led the gains with a 19.0% increase to \$0.9 billion. Most of the gains in this subsector were attributable to the agriculture sector, with the farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment industry up 25.7%, and the farm products subsector up 19.8%.

Inventories rise in May

Wholesale inventories increased 2.5% to \$115.2 billion in May, the fourth consecutive month of growth, and the second consecutive month in which all subsectors recorded higher inventories. The largest contributor to the inventory growth was the miscellaneous subsector, followed by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector, and the building material and supplies subsector.

The miscellaneous subsector saw inventories increase for the fourth consecutive month in May, up 4.2% to \$17.0 billion. Agricultural supplies merchant wholesalers were the highest contributing industry, up 9.0% to \$7.9 billion, accounting for 81% of the increase. The only industry within the miscellaneous subsector to have lower inventories was the recyclable material industry, which decreased 7.7%.

Inventories of machinery, equipment and supplies rose 2.0% to \$31.1 billion. Accounting for half of this increase was the farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment industry, which rose 5.1% to \$6.3 billion. The increase coincided with an 8.3% increase in imports of agriculture, lawn and garden machinery in May.

Inventories of the building material and supplies subsector increased 2.5% in May to \$22.0 billion. May was the second consecutive month in which all industries within the subsector reported higher inventories. The most significant contributor was the metal service centres industry, which saw inventories increase 6.0%, representing 65% of the subsector's growth.

The inventory-to-sales ratio increased from 1.41 in April to 1.42 in May. This ratio is a measure of the time (in months) required to exhaust inventories if sales were to remain at their current levels.

Table 1
Wholesale merchants' sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	May 2021	April 2022 ^r	May 2022 ^p	April to May 2022	May 2021 to May 2022
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)	72,588	79,811	81,099	1.6	11.7
Total, wholesale sales (2012 chained dollars)	62,050	62,154	62,836	1.1	1.3
Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts	61,990	68,142	69,254	1.6	11.7
Farm product	949	1,164	1,208	3.7	27.2
Food, beverage and tobacco	13,096	13,644	14,715	7.8	12.4
Food	11,489	12,100	13,156	8.7	14.5
Beverage	798	836	836	0.0	4.8
Cigarette and tobacco product	661	507	512	0.9	-22.6
Cannabis	149	201	211	4.9	42.1
Personal and household goods	10,230	11,423	11,399	-0.2	11.4
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,180	1,701	1,558	-8.4	32.1
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	886	1,028	962	-6.5	8.6
Home furnishings	656	750	740	-1.3	12.8
Personal goods	1,060	1,200	1,229	2.4	15.9
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	5,407	5,569	5,740	3.1	6.2
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,041	1,174	1,170	-0.3	12.3
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	10,598	11,669	11,845	1.5	11.8
Motor vehicle	8,239	8,969	9,063	1.0	10.0
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,293	2,617	2,711	3.6	18.2
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	66	82	71	-13.9	6.8
Building material and supplies	13,189	13,794	13,203	-4.3	0.1
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	3,182	3,810	3,757	-1.4	18.0
Metal service centres	2,102	2,694	2,751	2.1	30.9
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	7,905	7,290	6,695	-8.2	-15.3
Machinery, equipment and supplies	15,313	16,461	16,989	3.2	10.9
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	1,883	1,965	2,304	17.2	22.3
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	5,116	5,535	5,442	-1.7	6.4
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	4,924	5,028	5,353	6.5	8.7
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	3,390	3,933	3,890	-1.1	14.7
Miscellaneous	9,212	11,655	11,741	0.7	27.4
Recyclable material	1,409	1,801	1,627	-9.7	15.5
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,060	1,245	1,231	-1.1	16.1
Agricultural supplies	2,487	3,493	3,665	4.9	47.4
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,637	2,040	2,084	2.1	27.3
Other miscellaneous	2,620	3,074	3,133	1.9	19.6

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

Source(s): Tables [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0003-01](#).

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

	May 2021	April 2022 ^r	May 2022 ^p	April to May 2022	May 2021 to May 2022
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	72,588	79,811	81,099	1.6	11.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	446	401	416	3.6	-6.8
Prince Edward Island	116	135	134	-0.4	15.7
Nova Scotia	1,182	1,129	1,173	4.0	-0.7
New Brunswick	755	810	806	-0.6	6.8
Quebec	14,541	14,808	15,036	1.5	3.4
Ontario	36,036	40,206	40,936	1.8	13.6
Manitoba	1,657	1,725	1,754	1.7	5.9
Saskatchewan	2,469	3,420	3,557	4.0	44.0
Alberta	7,317	8,714	8,825	1.3	20.6
British Columbia	8,009	8,398	8,392	-0.1	4.8
Yukon	19	18	20	13.7	8.8
Northwest Territories	24	31	36	17.3	52.0
Nunavut	17	16	13	-15.8	-22.3

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

Source(s): Table [20-10-0074-01](#).

Table 3
Wholesale merchants' inventories by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	May 2021	April 2022 ^r	May 2022 ^p	April to May 2022	May 2021 to May 2022
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale inventories	95,758	112,391	115,236	2.5	20.3
Farm product	229	266	271	2.0	18.2
Food, beverage and tobacco	10,889	12,215	12,631	3.4	16.0
Food	9,606	10,789	11,152	3.4	16.1
Beverage	699	782	811	3.7	16.0
Cigarette and tobacco product	355	430	438	1.8	23.2
Cannabis	229	214	230	7.8	0.7
Personal and household goods	16,325	19,194	19,291	0.5	18.2
Textile, clothing and footwear	3,360	3,827	3,802 ^E	-0.7	13.2
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	947	1,352	1,371	1.4	44.7
Home furnishings	1,399	1,865	1,878	0.7	34.2
Personal goods	1,946	2,676	2,665	-0.4	37.0
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	7,554	8,336	8,458	1.5	12.0
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,119	1,138	1,118	-1.8	-0.1
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	12,451	12,456	12,962	4.1	4.1
Motor vehicle	7,577	6,840	6,697	-2.1	-11.6
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	4,757	5,508	6,165	11.9	29.6
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	F	108 ^E	F	F	F
Building material and supplies	16,519	21,505	22,036	2.5	33.4
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	4,468	6,277	6,452	2.8	44.4
Metal service centres	3,749	5,743	6,087	6.0	62.4
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	8,301	9,485	9,496	0.1	14.4
Machinery, equipment and supplies	26,525	30,477	31,079	2.0	17.2
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	5,529	5,977	6,279	5.1	13.6
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	12,039	13,626	13,736	0.8	14.1
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	3,236	4,131	4,310	4.3	33.2
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	5,721	6,743	6,753	0.2	18.0
Miscellaneous	12,819	16,279	16,967	4.2	32.4
Recyclable material	1,239 ^E	1,455	1,343	-7.7	8.4
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,050	1,291	1,305	1.1	24.3
Agricultural supplies	4,998	7,203	7,851	9.0	57.1
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,480	1,809	1,852	2.4	25.1
Other miscellaneous	4,052	4,522	4,616	2.1	13.9

^r revised

^p preliminary

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

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

Source(s): Table 20-10-0076-01.

Note to readers

All data in this release are seasonally adjusted and expressed in current dollars, unless otherwise noted.

Seasonally adjusted data are data that have been modified to eliminate the effect of seasonal and calendar influences to allow for more meaningful comparisons of economic conditions from period to period. For more information on seasonal adjustment, see [Section 2: Issues related to analysis and interpretation](#).

Trend-cycle estimates are included in selected charts as a complement to the seasonally adjusted series. These data represent a smoothed version of the Seasonally adjusted time series (see [Section 1: Concepts and definitions](#)) and provide information on longer-term movements, including changes in direction underlying the series. For information on trend-cycle data, see [Trend-cycle estimates – Frequently asked questions](#).

Both seasonally adjusted data and trend-cycle estimates are subject to revision as additional observations become available. These revisions could be large and could even lead to a reversal of movement, especially for reference months near the end of the series or during periods of economic disruptions.

Total wholesale sales expressed in volume are calculated by deflating current dollar values using relevant price indexes. The wholesale sales series in chained (2012) dollars is a chained Fisher volume index, with 2012 as the reference year. For more information, see ["Deflation of wholesale sales"](#).

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).

Real-time data tables

Real-time data tables 20-10-0019-01, 20-10-0020-01 and 20-10-0005-01 will be updated soon.

Next release

Wholesale trade data for June 2022 will be released on August 15, 2022.

Available tables: [20-10-0003-01](#), [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0076-01](#).

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

The product "[Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey: Interactive Tool](#)" ([71-607-X](#)) is available online. This product is based on the data published in the tables of the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey: 20-10-0074-01, 20-10-0076-01 and 20-10-0003-01.

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).