

Wholesale trade, September 2022

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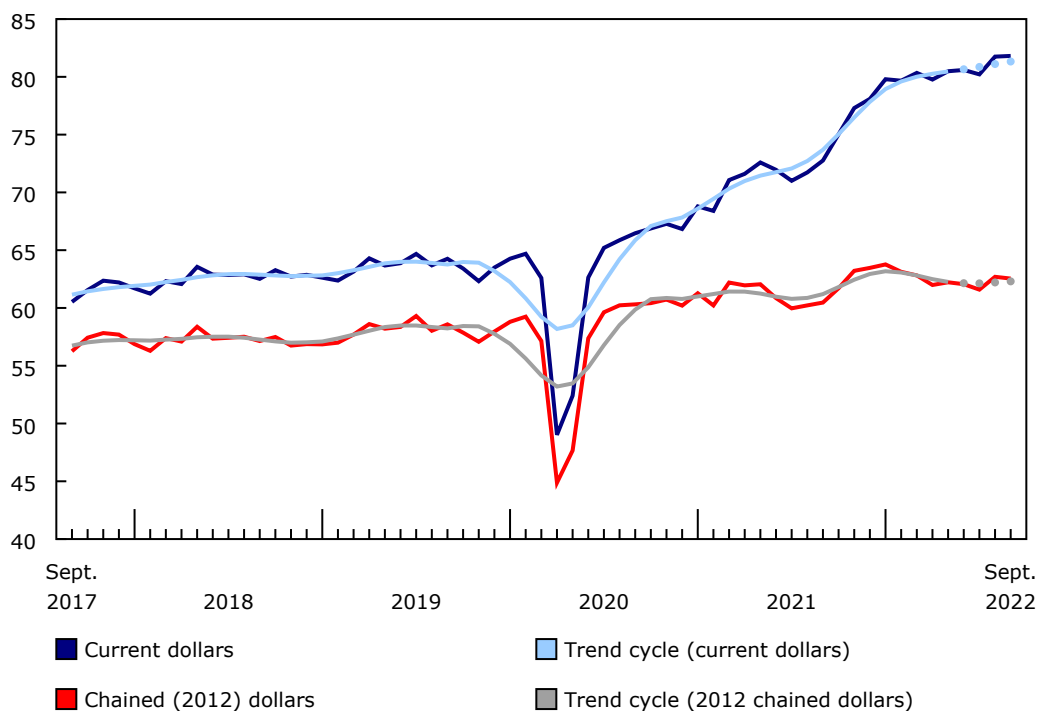
Wholesale sales rise slightly in September

In September, wholesale sales rose 0.1% to \$81.8 billion, with the largest increases coming from personal and household goods and food, beverage and tobacco. Sales rose in five of seven subsectors, which accounts for 70.2% of wholesale sales.

Meanwhile, constant dollar sales fell 0.2% in September.

Chart 1
Wholesale sales increase in September

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](#).

Personal and household goods led the increase in September

Sales of personal and household goods increased 4.3% to \$11.2 billion, the largest monthly increase since June 2020. The bulk of the rise was seen by pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies wholesalers (+5.7% to \$6.2 billion), the second consecutive monthly rise, reaching the second highest level since February 2022. The industry's growth correlates with higher [Canadian imports of pharmaceutical products](#) and is reflective of the recent availability of the latest COVID-19 vaccine. Growth in the toiletries, cosmetics and sundries industry (+4.9%) and in the personal goods industry (+3.7%) also contributed to the subsector increase.



Sales in the food, beverage and tobacco subsector rose 1.9% to \$14.9 billion in September, mainly due to higher sales in the food industry (+2.3% to \$13.3 billion). This subsector reported an increase for the third consecutive month, reaching a record-high sales level. Overall, as reported by the [Consumer Price Index](#), prices for groceries rose at the fastest pace since 1981, as the supply of food continues to be impacted by supply chain disruptions, geopolitical tensions, extreme weather, and higher input costs.

Following a robust August, the miscellaneous subsector posted the largest drop since April 2020, with sales falling 5.8% to \$12.3 billion in September 2022. Sales in three of the five component industries fell, with a substantial decrease in the agricultural supplies industry (-13.4% to \$4.7 billion). Agricultural supply wholesalers reported completion of contracts by the beginning of fall in preparation of their year-end, which is reflected in the steady climb of sales since May 2022.

Overall, sales in the third quarter of 2022 rose 1.2% to \$243.8 billion, a 13.1% increase from the same quarter in 2021. This was the fourth consecutive quarterly increase, with the largest increases coming from the machinery, equipment and supplies, and miscellaneous goods subsectors. In contrast, the largest quarterly decreases came from the building material and supplies and the personal and household goods subsectors. This was the second consecutive quarterly decline for both of these subsectors.

Constant dollar sales rose 0.3% in the third quarter of 2022 when compared with the previous quarter.

Quebec and Ontario lead provincial sales

Sales increased in three provinces and one territory in September. The increase was predominantly due to higher sales in Quebec and Ontario, while Saskatchewan recorded the largest drop.

Quebec reported the highest provincial increase in sales in September, up 1.4% to \$14.7 billion. Sales rose in five of the seven subsectors. The driving factor for sales in this province was the personal and household goods subsector (+4.5% to \$3.2 billion) and the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector (+7.3% to \$1.5 billion). The growth in sales for this province was partially offset by a 4.2% decline in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector.

Sales in Ontario edged up 0.2% to \$41.5 billion, as sales rose in two of seven subsectors. The slight increase was led by higher sales in the personal and household goods subsector (+5.7% to \$6.5 billion) and the food, beverage and tobacco subsector (+2.5% to \$6.9 billion). This was mitigated by a 5.4% drop in the miscellaneous subsector.

Saskatchewan saw the largest decline among the remaining provinces and territories, with a decrease of 2.5% to \$4.2 billion. Despite growth in six of seven subsectors, a sharp decrease in the agricultural supplies industry (-8.7% to \$2.6 billion) led the overall provincial sales decline.

Six provinces and two territories had higher sales in the third quarter of 2022 when compared with the previous quarter. Leading the gains were Ontario (+1.7%) and Saskatchewan (+13.2%). These increases were partially offset by declines in British Columbia (-3.4%) and Quebec (-1.4%).

Inventories level continue to grow

Inventories rose 1.2% to \$125 billion, the eighth consecutive monthly increase. Six of the seven subsectors reported increased inventories, led by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector and by the miscellaneous subsector. Building material and supplies was the only subsector with a decrease in inventories.

Inventories in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector rose by 1.5% to \$34.0 billion. This increase was mainly led by the computer and communications equipment and supplies and the other machinery, equipment and supplies industries. The machinery, equipment and supplies subsector accounted for the largest share of wholesale trade inventories, at 27.2%.

In the miscellaneous subsector, inventory levels increased 1.9% to \$18.9 billion. The increase was mainly due to the agricultural supplies industry, where inventories grew 3.2% to \$9.3 billion, followed by the chemical (excluding agricultural) and allied product industry, up 2.5% to \$2.0 billion.

The personal and household goods subsector also contributed to the growth in inventory levels, with a 1.4% increase to \$20.1 billion. This growth was largely due to the textile, clothing and footwear industry, with an increase of 3.9% to \$4.1 billion, followed by the personal goods industry, up by 5.4% to \$2.8 billion.

The inventory-to-sales ratio increased from 1.52 in August to 1.53 in September. This ratio is a measure of the time (in months) required to exhaust inventories if sales were to remain at their current levels.

Wholesale inventories increased by 5.9% in the third quarter of 2022. This increase was led by growth in stocks of machinery, equipment and supplies merchant wholesalers (+6.2%), building material and supplies (+6.8%) and miscellaneous (+7.8%). Inventories were up in all subsectors for the second consecutive quarter.

Table 1
Wholesale merchants' sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	September 2021	August 2022 ^r	September 2022 ^p	August to September 2022	September 2021 to September 2022
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)	72,759	81,750	81,810	0.1	12.4
Total, wholesale sales (2012 chained dollars)	60,466	62,695	62,542	-0.2	3.4
Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts	62,169	69,631	69,578	-0.1	11.9
Farm product	1,063	1,112	1,223	9.9	15.0
Food, beverage and tobacco	13,487	14,660	14,945	1.9	10.8
Food	11,781	13,003	13,301	2.3	12.9
Beverage	817	910	865	-5.0	5.8
Cigarette and tobacco product	693	525	521	-0.7	-24.8
Cannabis	195	223	258	15.9	32.6
Personal and household goods	10,820	10,736	11,196	4.3	3.5
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,253	1,341	1,362	1.6	8.7
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	798	745	762	2.4	-4.4
Home furnishings	740	728	729	0.2	-1.4
Personal goods	1,246	991	1,027	3.7	-17.6
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	5,720	5,821	6,151	5.7	7.5
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,063	1,111	1,165	4.9	9.6
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	10,590	12,120	12,232	0.9	15.5
Motor vehicle	8,185	9,681	9,624	-0.6	17.6
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,323	2,360	2,531	7.3	9.0
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	83	79	77	-2.3	-6.5
Building material and supplies	11,344	12,439	12,128	-2.5	6.9
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	3,321	3,653	3,652	-0.0	10.0
Metal service centres	2,263	2,631	2,577	-2.1	13.9
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	5,761	6,155	5,900	-4.1	2.4
Machinery, equipment and supplies	14,907	17,672	17,833	0.9	19.6
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	1,872	2,410	2,555	6.0	36.5
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	4,835	6,198	5,988	-3.4	23.8
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	4,710	5,051	5,264	4.2	11.7
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	3,490	4,014	4,026	0.3	15.4
Miscellaneous	10,547	13,010	12,252	-5.8	16.2
Recyclable material	1,554	1,322	1,295	-2.1	-16.7
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,139	1,274	1,299	2.0	14.0
Agricultural supplies	3,334	5,476	4,742	-13.4	42.2
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,853	2,058	2,012	-2.2	8.6
Other miscellaneous	2,667	2,880	2,904	0.8	8.9

^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

	September 2021	August 2022 ^r	September 2022 ^p	August to September 2022	September 2021 to September 2022
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	72,759	81,750	81,810	0.1	12.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	371	395	388	-1.9	4.6
Prince Edward Island	131	116	112	-4.1	-14.5
Nova Scotia	1,119	1,145	1,103	-3.7	-1.4
New Brunswick	756	789	773	-2.0	2.2
Quebec	13,905	14,502	14,711	1.4	5.8
Ontario	37,413	41,408	41,496	0.2	10.9
Manitoba	1,617	2,005	1,975	-1.5	22.1
Saskatchewan	2,823	4,328	4,222	-2.5	49.5
Alberta	7,436	9,158	9,124	-0.4	22.7
British Columbia	7,135	7,837	7,836	-0.0	9.8
Yukon	16	x	x	x	x
Northwest Territories	26	37	37	-0.9	41.8
Nunavut	13	x	x	x	x

^r revised

^p preliminary

^x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

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

	September 2021	August 2022 ^r	September 2022 ^p	August to September 2022	September 2021 to September 2022
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale inventories	98,945	123,512	124,954	1.2	26.3
Farm product	257	324	363	12.1	41.4
Food, beverage and tobacco	11,414	13,642	13,856	1.6	21.4
Food	9,996	12,094	12,289	1.6	22.9
Beverage	733	827	822	-0.6	12.2
Cigarette and tobacco product	487	470	507	7.9	4.0
Cannabis	198	251	238	-5.2	20.5
Personal and household goods	16,767	19,832	20,118	1.4	20.0
Textile, clothing and footwear	3,342	3,955	4,111	3.9	23.0
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	1,015	1,457	1,414	-2.9	39.3
Home furnishings	1,517	2,024	2,066 ^E	2.1	36.2
Personal goods	2,168	2,703	2,849	5.4	31.4
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	7,580	8,519	8,528	0.1	12.5
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,145	1,176	1,150	-2.2	0.4
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	10,518	13,446	13,628	1.4	29.6
Motor vehicle	5,385	7,402	7,648	3.3	42.0
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	5,013	5,929	5,869	-1.0	17.1
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	F	F	111 ^E	F	F
Building material and supplies	18,457	24,196	24,067	-0.5	30.4
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	4,971	7,091	7,082	-0.1	42.5
Metal service centres	4,749	6,961	6,783	-2.6	42.8
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	8,737	10,143	10,201	0.6	16.8
Machinery, equipment and supplies	27,654	33,510	34,001	1.5	22.9
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	5,835	6,449	6,550	1.6	12.2
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	12,298	15,310	15,365	0.4	24.9
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	3,483	4,646	4,824	3.8	38.5
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	6,038	7,106	7,262	2.2	20.3
Miscellaneous	13,879	18,562	18,922	1.9	36.3
Recyclable material	1,289	1,135	1,148	1.2	-10.9
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,147	1,318	1,354	2.7	18.1
Agricultural supplies	5,842	9,037	9,325	3.2	59.6
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,681	1,939	1,988	2.5	18.3
Other miscellaneous	3,921	5,133	5,107	-0.5	30.3

^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 underlying changes in direction in 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 October 2022 will be released on December 16, 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).