



## GRAIN TRANSPORTATION REPORT

Shipper and Exporter Assistance Program  
Transportation and Marketing Division  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
United States Department of Agriculture

September 22, 1997

**Corn Growers Predict Smaller Harvest.** Members of the National Corn Growers Association (NGFA) concluded that crop size would like be smaller this year due to early frosts and weather variability. The member poll, taken at a recent NGFA meeting, predicted a harvest size of 9.108 billion bushels, slightly below the recent USDA estimate of 9.268 billion bushels. Ryland Utlaut, NGFA president, stated that it is particularly difficult to get a "true picture of this year's crop because we see so much variability," citing the extreme wet and dry conditions of Wisconsin, for example. Despite the expected decrease, growers will still see a large harvest accompanied by a strong demand as new uses for corn increase. (*Reuter*)

**BNSF Proposal Focuses On Congestion.** The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) offered initiatives to ease congestion problems on Union Pacific's (UP) Southwest track. The initiatives involve temporary changes to operating conditions imposed by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) during the UP/ Southern Pacific (UPSP) merger. The railroad is essentially seeking to broaden its access to trackage in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas, beyond the rights which the company won following the UPSP merger. As proposed, BNSF claims that temporary measures would help restore normal shipping patterns and allow more consistent transit times, improve its ability to move shipments originating in the Houston area, enable traffic not originating or terminating at Houston to bypass the area, and reduce congestion problems for the UPSP. There was no immediate response from UPSP after having been sent a copy of the proposals. Previously, officials from UPSP believe it will take several months before congestion is cleared. Likewise, BNSF officials do not believe UPSP will be able to restore normal traffic flow before year-end. Any proposed changes would need to be reviewed and approved by the STB. (*Journal of Commerce, BNSF Web Site*)

**Railcar Loadings Of Grain.** Railcar loadings of grain totaled 20,539 cars for the week ending Sept. 13, which is 12 percent higher than the preceding week and nearly 8 percent higher than last year at this time. Grain shipments have been running lower than last year by about 2 percent. Recent service problems in the southwest has caused some concern with grain merchants, especially for grain shipments destined for export. The *Major Export Sales* report shows unshipped balances for the current and next marketing year total 21.113 million metric tons (MMT) as of the week ended Sept. 12, as compared to 24.265 MMT last year for the similar week. The corn harvest is in the beginning stages which will increase railcar demand.

**River Situation.** At the Melvin Price Locks and Dam during the previous 24 hours ending midnight Sunday (Sept. 21), 11 tows with 132 barges passed upbound, and 9 tows with 108 barges passed in the downbound direction. On Monday (Sept. 22), at 6:00 a.m., there was one tow waiting to go upbound, and one tow waiting to go downbound. Locks and Dam No. 27 continues to undergo maintenance. Work is expected to be completed within a few weeks. Currently, there is a backlog of tows waiting to transit the lock. In the Columbia River Basin on Friday (Sept. 19), 6 vessels were at berth loading, while 10 waited.

This report is prepared by Bill Dunton, Traffic Management Specialist. Other contributors to this report include Karl Hacker, Nick Marathon, and Paul Bertels, Agricultural Economists, AMS, Transportation and Marketing Division - (202)690-1303. You can retrieve this document from our Automatic Fax System by using the handset on your fax machine and dialing (202)690-1707. Reach us on the Internet at [www.usda.gov/ams/tmd/grain.htm](http://www.usda.gov/ams/tmd/grain.htm).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital status. (Nota all prohibits bases ally to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alterative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications at (202)720-2799. To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC, 20250, or call (800)245-6340 (voice) or (202)720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

---

**SOUTHBOUND BARGE FREIGHT RATES\***

**Week Ended September 12**

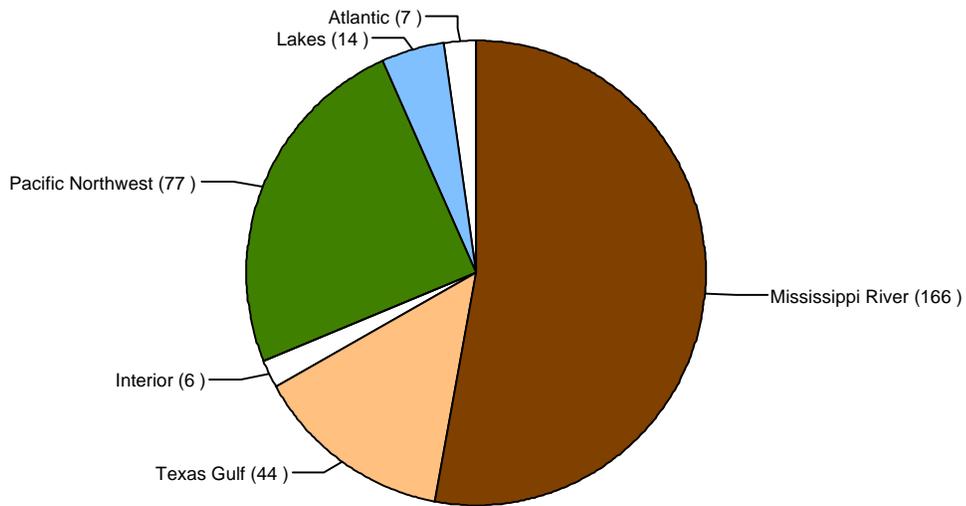
<b>River/Region</b>	<b>Contract Period</b>	<b>Rate**</b>
Data not available		

---

\* Based on Actual Trades from the Merchants Exchange of St. Louis Barge Call Session  
\*\* Rates are Quoted as a Percentage of the 1976 Tariff Benchmark

**U.S. GRAIN EXPORTS, BY REGION  
AUGUST 1997**

*million bushels*



<b>WEEK ENDED</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>COMPARABLE WEEK</b>
		<b>1996</b>

**INSPECTIONS FOR EXPORT***1,000 Bushels*

Aug 14	62,428 *	69,438
Aug 21	74,877 *	68,389
Aug 28	74,316 *	61,993
Sept 4	59,616 *	61,240
Sept 11	76,844	62,885
Calendar Year to Date	2,428,727 *	2,955,733

\* Revised

**RAIL CARLOADINGS***Carloads*

Aug 16	22,981 *	20,209 *
Aug 23	22,751 *	20,413 *
Aug 30	24,817 *	23,153 *
Sept 6	18,071 *	16,879 *
Sept 13	20,539 *	18,930 *
Calendar Year to Date	849,474 *	868,319 *

\* Revised - Soo Line Not Included

**RAIL DELIVERIES TO PORT***Carloads*

	North Atlantic	So. Atlantic & Gulf	Pacific Coast	North Atlantic	So. Atlantic & Gulf	Pacific Coast
Aug 13	49	2,285	3,456	53	3,200	1,368
Aug 20	11	3,603	2,502	4	2,710	1,663
Aug 27	2	2,585	2,734	0	2,097	1,710
Sept 3	2	2,042	3,662	9	1,975	1,242
Sept 10	26	2,675	3,266	0	2,776	1,629
CY to Date	1,183	80,649 *	132,826	2,608	109,947	144,680

\* Revised

**BARGE GRAIN MOVEMENTS***1,000 Tons*

River / Lock Number	Week ending 9/6/97					Week ending 9/7/96				
	CORN	WHT.	SOY	OTHER	TOTAL	CORN	WHT.	SOY	OTHER	TOTAL
Miss./15	254	24	19	0	297	33	57	36	9	136
Miss./25	421	44	72	0	536	86	54	85	14	239
Miss./26	539	58	99	0	695	109	54	126	14	302
Miss./27	475	80	95	0	649	119	62	142	5	328
Ill./8	92	6	18	0	116	14	3	18	0	35
Ohio/52	8	24	6	31	69	28	29	7	43	108
Ark./1	2	42	0	0	44	0	13	7	0	20

Calendar year totals for Miss./27, Ohio/52 and Ark./1:

Year	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other Grains	Total
1997	20,270	1,801	4,897	2,292	29,259
1996	23,688	1,756	5,107	2,864	33,416

Other grains include barley, sorghum and oats. Totals may not add due to rounding. Data source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**MAJOR EXPORT SALES \****1,000 Metric Tons*

WEEK ENDED	1997			COMPARABLE WEEK 1996		
	WHEAT	CORN	SOYBEANS	WHEAT	CORN	SOYBEANS
Aug 15	5,552	8,268	6,993	6,256	14,499	4,524
Aug 22	5,252	7,765	7,295	5,964	14,381	4,438
Aug 29	5,292	7,705	7,641	5,652	13,975	4,637
Sept 5	5,336	7,730	7,759	5,275	14,289	4,589
Sept 12	5,255	7,761	8,097	4,928	14,671	4,666

\*Unshipped Balances-Current &amp; Next Marketing Year

**GULF COAST OCEAN GRAIN VESSELS**

	1997			1996		
	IN PORT	LOADED 7 DAYS	DUE NEXT 10 DAYS	IN PORT	LOADED 7 DAYS	DUE NEXT 10 DAYS
Aug 21	34	61	54	31	43	45
Aug 28	28	52	55	26	41	45
Sept 4	33	39	55	34	38	42
Sept 11	33	46	59	28	36	49
Sept 18	35	56	64	39	32	55

**AVERAGE GRAIN PRICES***Dollars Per Bushel*

	1997			1996		
	WHEAT	CORN <sup>1</sup>	SOYBEANS <sup>2</sup>	WHEAT	CORN <sup>1</sup>	SOYBEANS <sup>2</sup>
Aug 15	3.78	2.62	7.58	5.07	4.86	8.23
Aug 22	3.86	2.71	7.38	5.03	4.72	8.12
Aug 29	3.95	2.75	7.30	4.94	4.14	8.12
Sept 5	3.98	2.72	6.65	4.76	3.63	8.07
Sept 12	3.83	2.75	6.56	4.68	3.68	8.22

(Wheat-#1 HRW-ORD., Kansas City; Corn-#2 Yellow, Chicago; Soybeans-#1 Yellow, Chicago)

<sup>1</sup> Bought to arrive 15 days; <sup>2</sup> Bought to arrive 30 days.**OCEAN FREIGHT RATES\****Dollars/Tons - Basis Vessel Size/Ton*

U.S. Loading Port	Destination	Estimated Freight Rates	Dates of Movement
St. Lawrence	Venezuela	\$18.25 - (25M)	September
St. Lawrence	Iran	\$19.75 - (60M)	September
Gulf	Egypt	\$12.85 - (68M)	September
Gulf	Algeria	\$22.00 - (25M)	September
Gulf	Japan	\$22.50 - (54M)	October
Gulf	Tunisia	\$17.75 - (25M)	September.

\*These ocean fixtures are based on full ship charters.