



Grain Transportation Report

A weekly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service
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WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

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Grain Inspections Continue to Increase

For the week ending September 17, **total inspections of grain** (corn, wheat, soybeans) from all major export regions reached 1.89 million metric tons (mmt), up 6 percent from the past week, down 8 percent from last year, and 5 percent above the 3-year average. The increase was due primarily to a 35 percent jump in soybean inspections, which are the highest since early April. Notably, the southern States of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi are all further along in their soybean harvest compared to the 5-year average, which could explain the recent uptick in movements of soybeans to market. Corn inspections increased 2 percent from the past week, but wheat inspections decreased 8 percent. Grain inspections in the Pacific Northwest increased 46 percent from the previous week, while Mississippi Gulf grain inspections increased 14 percent. Outstanding export sales of soybeans were up from the past week, but outstanding corn and wheat export sales continued to decrease.

2015 STB National Grain Car Council Meeting

On September 17, the Surface Transportation Board convened its annual National Grain Car Council meeting in Kansas City, MO. The session brought together members from the railroads; grain shippers and receivers; and railcar manufacturers to discuss rail carriers' readiness to provide service during the upcoming grain harvest. Two themes emerged at this year's meeting: (1) railroads are well-equipped to handle the harvest and the situation is much improved from the previous two years (see [this week's feature](#)), and (2) there is concern from both railroads and shippers about the approaching deadline for positive train control (PTC). A recent **GAO study** found that most railroads have experienced challenges in implementing PTC and will not be fully compliant by the December 31st deadline. Shipper and railroad groups, among others, foresee major disruptions in rail transportation without an extension.

Panama Canal Lock Maintenance Scheduled, Reduces Transit Capacity

The East Lane of the Gatun Locks on the Panama Canal will be closed for maintenance and repair work on September 24, 26 and 28, 2015. The estimated transit capacity of the Canal due to the maintenance work is 22–24 vessels per day, rather than the normal transit capacity of 34–36 vessels, depending on vessel mix and other factors. At this time, no major delays are anticipated.

Snapshots by Sector

Export Sales

During the week ending September 10, **unshipped balances** of wheat, corn, and soybeans totaled 29.7 mmt, down 29 percent from the same time last year. Net weekly **wheat export sales** of .378 mmt were up 30 percent from the prior week. Net **corn export sales** were .533 mmt, down 71 percent from the prior week, and net **soybean export sales** of .912 mmt were down 65 percent from the past week.

Rail

U.S. Class I railroads originated 17,897 **carloads of grain** during the week ending September 12, down 5 percent from last week, up 5 percent from last year, and up 8 percent from the 3-year average.

During the week ending September 17, average October shuttle **secondary railcar bids/offers** per car were \$404 above tariff, down \$3 from last week, and \$3,021 lower than last year. Non-shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers were \$44 above tariff. There were no non-shuttle railcar bids/offers for October last week or this week of last year.

Barge

During the week ending September 19, **barge grain movements** totaled 370,566 tons, down 2 percent from last week, and up 8 percent from the same period last year.

During the week ending September 19, 248 grain barges **moved down river**, about same as last week; 764 grain barges were **unloaded in New Orleans**, up 28 percent from the previous week.

Ocean

During the week ending September 17, 36 **ocean-going grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf, 24 percent more than the same period last year. Sixty-one vessels are expected to be loaded within the next 10 days, 2 percent more than the same period last year.

During the week ending September 18, the ocean freight rate for shipping bulk grain from the Gulf to Japan was \$34 per metric ton (mt), down 1 percent from the previous week. The cost of shipping from the PNW to Japan was \$18 per mt, unchanged from the previous week.

Fuel

During the week ending September 21, U.S. average **diesel fuel prices** decreased 2 cents from the previous week to \$2.49 per gallon—down \$1.29 from the same week last year.

Feature Article/Calendar

Rail Service Going Into 2015 Harvest

The rail network in 2015 appears much more capable of handling this year's grain harvest compared to the past 2 years. Beginning in the second quarter of 2013, grain shippers faced major disruptions in rail service that lasted through 2014. To get a sense of the rail situation as we head into the 2015 harvest season, this article looks at crop production and storage, railcar loadings and performance, secondary rail car auction rates, and highlights from last week's Surface Transportation Board's (STB) National Grain Car Council meeting.

According to USDA's World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimate projections, 2015 grain production in the U.S. is on par with the record production in 2013 and 2014. In August of 2015, total U.S. production of corn, soybeans, and wheat is projected at 432 million metric tons (mmt). Total U.S. grain output was 431 mmt in 2013, and 439 mmt in 2014, both well above average. U.S. grain production's impact on the rail system depends on many factors, such as rail network performance, capacity, track, crew and equipment, demand from other commodities moved by rail, grain export demand, and storage availability. Storage capacity can help mitigate constraints as higher levels of available storage alleviate pressure on the transportation system. For instance, farmers with storage do not need to bring their entire crop to market immediately. From December 1, 2013 to December 1, 2014, grain storage capacity in the U.S. increased by 341 million bushels (1.4 percent). In addition, several options are available for temporary storage of grain, such as systems involving rigid sidewalls, tarps and aeration systems, as well as sealed grain bag storage systems.

The 2013/14 Rail Disruptions

The rail service disruptions in 2013 and 2014 were not just a result of record harvests. In 2013/14 there were serious rail capacity constraints due to significant increases in the demand for rail service from many commodity sectors, including grain, intermodal, coal, and oil. Because of this, grain shippers competed for rail service with many other commodities, all up at the same time. Table 1 shows six-month totals of railcar loadings by commodity. Between the first and second half of 2013, farm products increased by 10 percent. Intermodal and coal, which together represent nearly half of all railcar loadings, increased by 6 and 4 percent respectively. In the first half of 2014, there was some decline in car loadings from intermodal, coal, and other, but each was a small decline relative to the previous increases. Meanwhile, farm products and petroleum continued to rise, 2 percent and 19 percent respectively. All of the commodities continued to rise in the second half of 2014, though at a slightly slower pace compared to the second half of 2013. Total car loadings increased by 4 percent, compared to 5 percent in 2013.

Commodity	2013, Jan-Jun	2013, Jul-Dec	% chg.	2014, Jan-Jun	% chg.	2014, Jul-Dec	% chg.	2015, Jan-Jun	% chg.
Miscellaneous Mixed Shipments (Intermodal)	4,570,479	4,823,675	6%	4,790,481	-1%	4,996,953	4%	4,810,922	-4%
Coal	3,350,595	3,479,523	4%	3,455,741	-1%	3,547,362	3%	3,199,807	-10%
Farm Products	857,853	945,810	10%	967,096	2%	975,756	1%	922,044	-6%
Crude Petroleum, Natural Gas or Gasoline	360,798	369,317	2%	437,932	19%	489,000	12%	421,292	-14%
Other	8,465,480	8,865,007	5%	8,797,606	-1%	9,336,656	6%	8,888,449	-5%
Total	9,139,725	9,618,325	5%	9,651,250	0%	10,009,071	4%	9,354,065	-7%

Source: Escalation Consultants, Rail Rate Checker

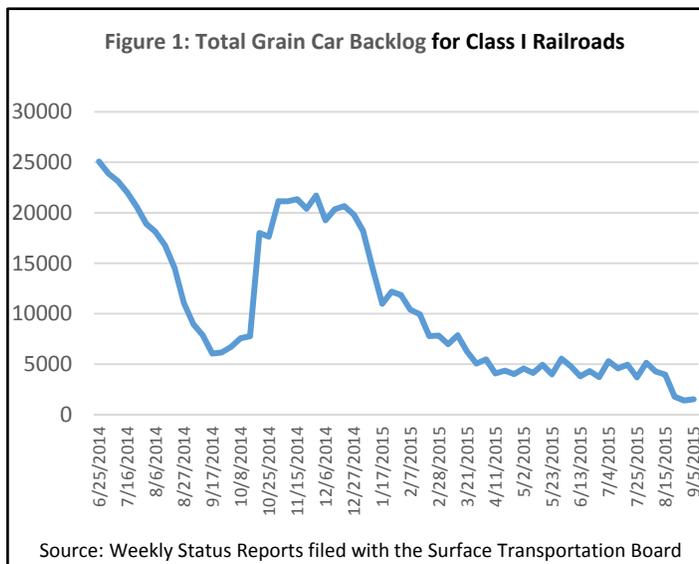
The combination of record grain harvests and increased rail car loadings from other commodities meant that rail demand was exceptionally high. However, this was only part of the story. At the same time that railcar loadings were so high, rail capacity was diminishing due to track maintenance, worker shortages, and extreme winter weather. In the midst of the delays, STB required Class I railroads to submit weekly status reports containing data on the number of outstanding grain car orders, along with many other railroad specific performance data. These numbers highlight the extent to which the demand for rail cars exceeded rail capacity. When reporting started in June of 2014, total U.S. grain backlogs were about 25,000 (Figure 1). During the peak harvest period for corn and soybeans, the backlogs averaged about 20,000 from late October to early January.

Rail performance measures, such as average train speed, also pointed to problems in rail network performance during the period. Train speeds were very slow during the 2013/2014 service disruptions. Before the disruptions, between May 2012 and May 2013, train speeds averaged 23.2 mph, but were only 20 mph in 2014. More specifically, during the period of the disruptions, Burlington North Sante Fe reached a low of 18.6 mph, and Canadian Pacific reached a low of 12.5 mph. Dwell times tell a similar story. At the end of 2013, U.S. average

dwell times spiked. The average for 2013 was 24 hours; however, the final weeks of 2013 were well above that average, peaking at 32 hours. Dwell times fell some after harvest, but stayed relatively high throughout 2014 at an average of 27 hours.

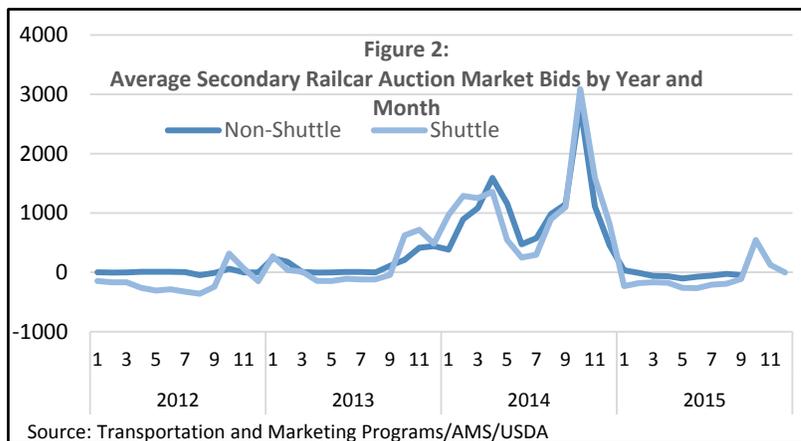
Fast Forward to 2015

These trends have reversed in the first two quarters of 2015. Car loadings from other commodities have been falling. Table 1 shows that between the second half of 2014 and the first half of 2015, railcar loadings fell significantly for each of the commodities, relative to the same time a year prior. For example, coal fell by 10 percent, intermodal fell by 4 percent, and petroleum fell by 14 percent. Car loadings by farm products, including grain, are also down in 2015. This is likely the result of farmers holding on to grain in the midst of low crop prices. When farmers do decide to start selling more grain, it appears they will not have the same level of competition for railcars as they did in 2013 and 2014. Rail performance has also improved. Rail car backlogs have declined 92 percent, from 18,152 at the beginning of 2015 to 1,536 as of September 5. Average train speeds during the first two quarters of 2015 rose back to their pre-disruption levels of above 23 mph. Further, average dwell times during the same period are down to 26 hours, which is still above the average for the first half of 2012, but is well below the first half of 2014 average of 30 hours.



Rail Car Auction Markets

Secondary railcar auction markets confirm the trends. Figure 2 illustrates the duration and magnitude of the disruptions. Starting in the second quarter of 2013, shippers bid up the price of railcars above tariff when they recognized the scarcity. This continued through 2014 and ended in the beginning of 2015. Throughout this year, bids have hovered around zero. As of September, bids on future months have risen somewhat, but are nowhere near the levels seen during the disruption years. These markets suggest that shippers do not expect the same kinds of disruptions as they did in the previous 2 years.



2015 National Grain Car Council Meeting

The STB’s National Grain Car Council consists of members from the Class I, Class II, and Class III railroads; grain shippers and receivers; and members representing private rail car owners and rail car manufacturers. Each year the members hold a meeting to discuss rail carrier preparedness for transporting grain during harvest. At this year’s meeting on September 17, all participants unanimously agreed there have been significant improvements in rail service since last year that will enable the rail system to adequately handle this year’s harvest. Railroads have made significant investments in increasing crews, expanding track, and buying additional locomotives. Railroads and shippers alike projected a positive situation, describing a fluid network, many grain cars available for use, strong velocity, reduced dwell times, and adequate capacity. One remarked, “What a difference a year makes.”

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Grain Transportation Indicators

Table 1

Grain Transport Cost Indicators¹

Week ending	Truck	Rail	Barge	Ocean	
		Unit Train	Shuttle	Gulf	Pacific
09/23/15	167	252	228	152	128
09/16/15	169	243	205	154	128

¹Indicator: Base year 2000 = 100; Weekly updates include truck = diesel (\$/gallon); rail = near-month secondary rail market bid and monthly tariff rate with fuel surcharge (\$/car); barge = Illinois River barge rate (index = percent of tariff rate); and ocean = routes to Japan (\$/metric ton)

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Market Update: U.S. Origins to Export Position Price Spreads (\$/bushel)

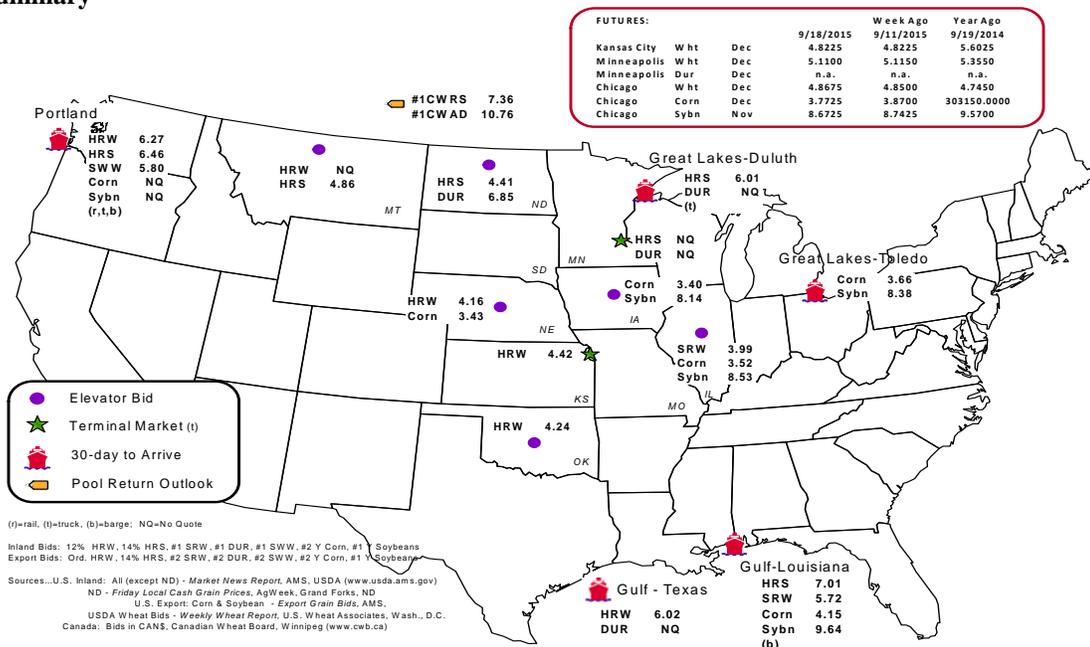
Commodity	Origin--Destination	9/18/2015	9/11/2015
Corn	IL--Gulf	-0.63	-0.73
Corn	NE--Gulf	-0.72	-0.81
Soybean	IA--Gulf	-1.50	-1.31
HRW	KS--Gulf	-1.60	-1.52
HRS	ND--Portland	-2.05	-2.08

Note: nq = no quote

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

The **grain bid summary** illustrates the market relationships for commodities. Positive and negative adjustments in differential between terminal and futures markets, and the relationship to inland market points, are indicators of changes in fundamental market supply and demand. The map may be used to monitor market and time differentials.

Figure 1
Grain bid Summary



Rail Transportation

Table 3

Rail Deliveries to Port (carloads)¹

Week ending	Mississippi		Pacific	Atlantic &	Total	Week ending	Cross-Border Mexico ³
	Gulf	Texas Gulf	Northwest	East Gulf			
9/16/2015 ^p	110	986	2,578	196	3,870	9/12/2015	2,338
9/9/2015 ^r	3	1,420	2,520	188	4,131	9/5/2015	1,462
2015 YTD ^f	12,983	43,196	144,466	15,416	216,061	2015 YTD	66,596
2014 YTD ^f	21,829	60,426	162,077	18,670	263,002	2014 YTD	70,031
2015 YTD as % of 2014 YTD	59	71	89	83	82	% change YTD	95
Last 4 weeks as % of 2014 ²	26	65	66	56	64	Last 4wks % 2014	94
Last 4 weeks as % of 4-year avg. ²	40	70	85	125	80	Last 4wks % 4 yr	125
Total 2014	44,621	83,674	256,670	32,107	417,072	Total 2014	96,467
Total 2013	31,646	71,388	168,826	25,176	297,036	Total 2013	71,397

¹ Data is incomplete as it is voluntarily provided

² Compared with same 4-weeks in 2013 and prior 4-year average.

³ Cross-border weekly data is approximately 15 percent below the Association of American Railroads reported weekly carloads received by Mexican railroads to reflect switching between KCSM and FerroMex.

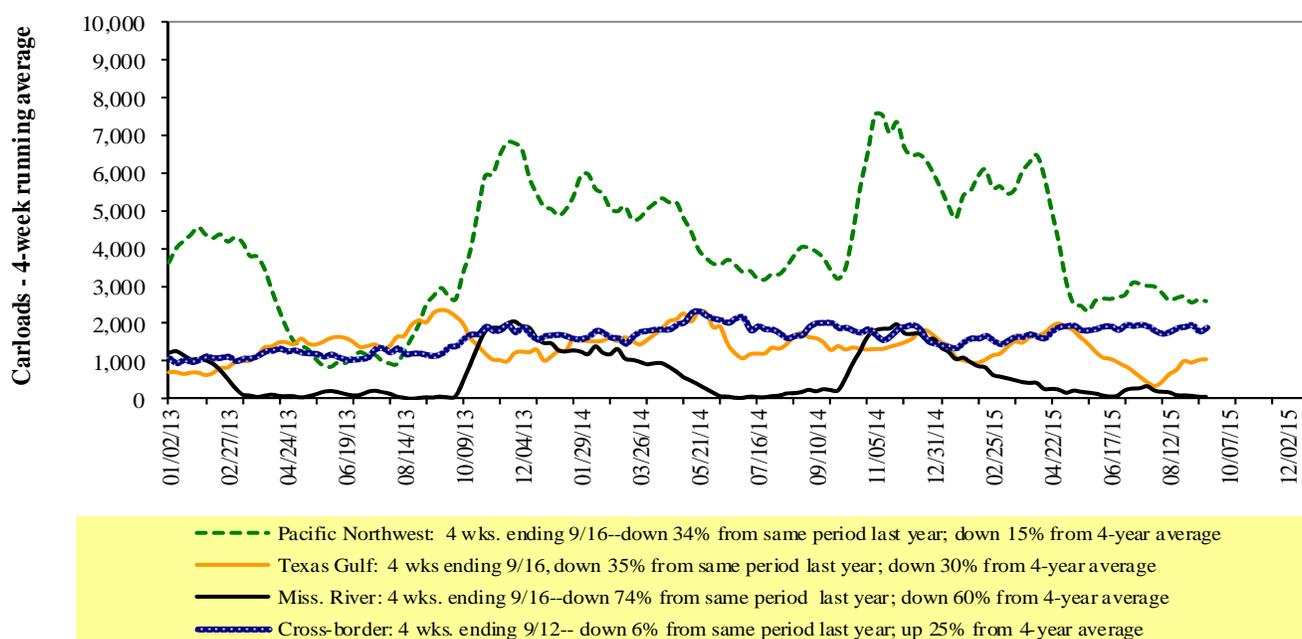
YTD = year-to-date; p = preliminary data; r = revised data; n/a = not available

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Railroads originate approximately 24 percent of U.S. grain shipments. Trends in these loadings are indicative of market conditions and expectations.

Figure 2

Rail Deliveries to Port



Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

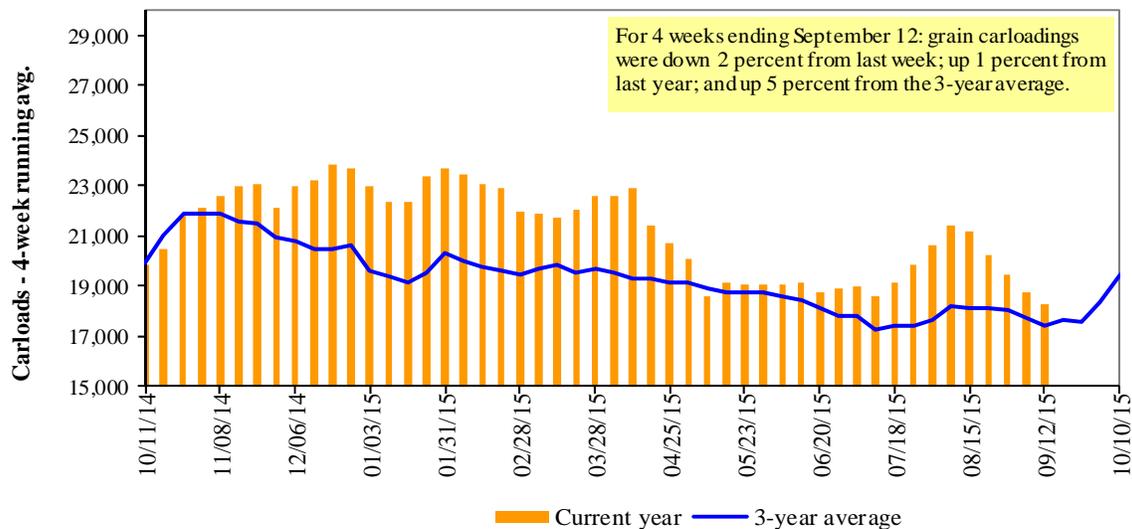
Table 4

Class I Rail Carrier Grain Car Bulletin (grain carloads originated)

Week ending	East		West			U.S. total	Canada	
	CSXT	NS	BNSF	KCS	UP		CN	CP
09/12/15	919	2,205	9,086	1,073	4,614	17,897	3,366	4,582
This week last year	1,149	1,982	8,663	795	4,537	17,126	4,117	4,733
2015 YTD	70,226	104,192	352,654	31,460	182,822	741,354	143,248	160,838
2014 YTD	64,993	102,378	314,016	30,120	201,179	712,686	159,343	190,345
2015 YTD as % of 2014 YTD	108	102	112	104	91	104	90	84
Last 4 weeks as % of 2014 ¹	90	106	105	105	94	101	76	90
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr avg. ²	112	115	98	113	106	104	83	95
Total 2014	103,331	153,771	482,431	47,510	297,969	1,085,012	242,616	276,322

¹The past 4 weeks of this year as a percent of the same 4 weeks last year.

²The past 4 weeks as a percent of the same period from the prior 3-year average. YTD = year-to-date.

Figure 3**Total Weekly U.S. Class I Railroad Grain Car Loadings**

Source: Association of American Railroads

Table 5

Railcar Auction Offerings¹ (\$/car)²

Week ending	Delivery period							
	Oct-15	Oct-14	Nov-15	Nov-14	Dec-15	Dec-14	Jan-16	Jan-15
9/17/2015								
BNSF ³								
COT grain units	11	no offer	no bids	no offer	no bids	no offer	no bids	no offer
COT grain single-car ⁵	0.. 17	no offer	no bids	no offer	no bids	no offer	no bids	no offer
UP ⁴								
GCAS/Region 1	no bids	no offer	10	no offer	no bids	no offer	n/a	n/a
GCAS/Region 2	10	2197	10	1187	no bids	no offer	n/a	n/a

¹Auction offerings are for single-car and unit train shipments only.

²Average premium/discount to tariff, last auction

³BNSF - COT = Certificate of Transportation; north grain and south grain bids were combined effective the week ending 6/24/06.

⁴UP - GCAS = Grain Car Allocation System

 Region 1 includes: AR, IL, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX, WI, and Duluth, MN.

 Region 2 includes: CO, IA, KS, MN, NE, WY, and Kansas City and St. Joseph, MO.

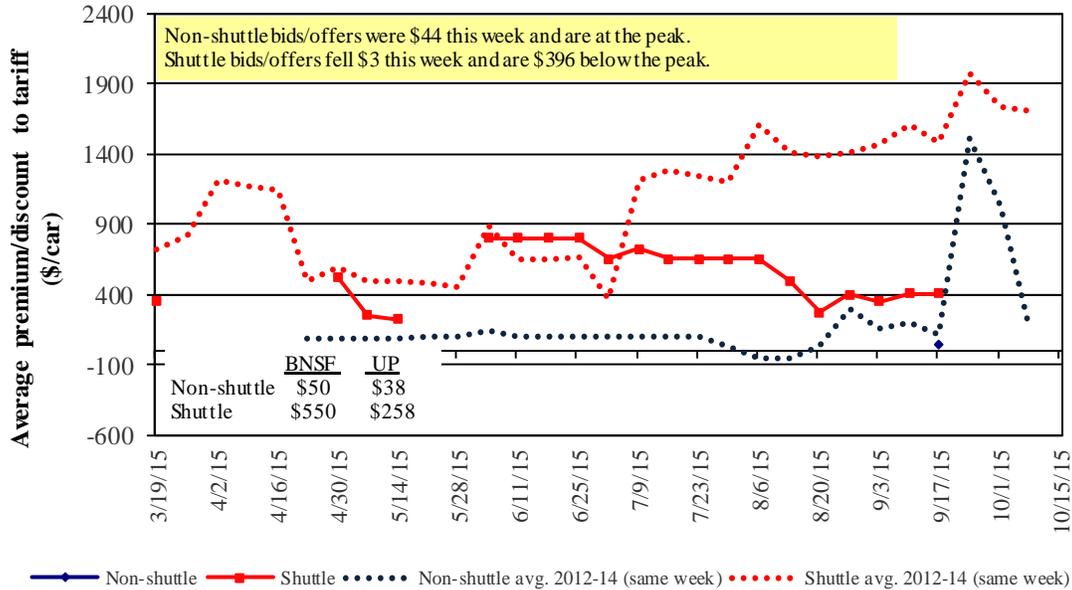
⁵Range is shown because average is not available. Not available = n/a.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA.

The **secondary rail market** information reflects trade values for service that was originally purchased from the railroad carrier as some form of guaranteed freight. The **auction and secondary rail** values are indicators of rail service quality and demand/supply.

Figure 4

Bids/Offers for Railcars to be Delivered in October 2015, Secondary Market

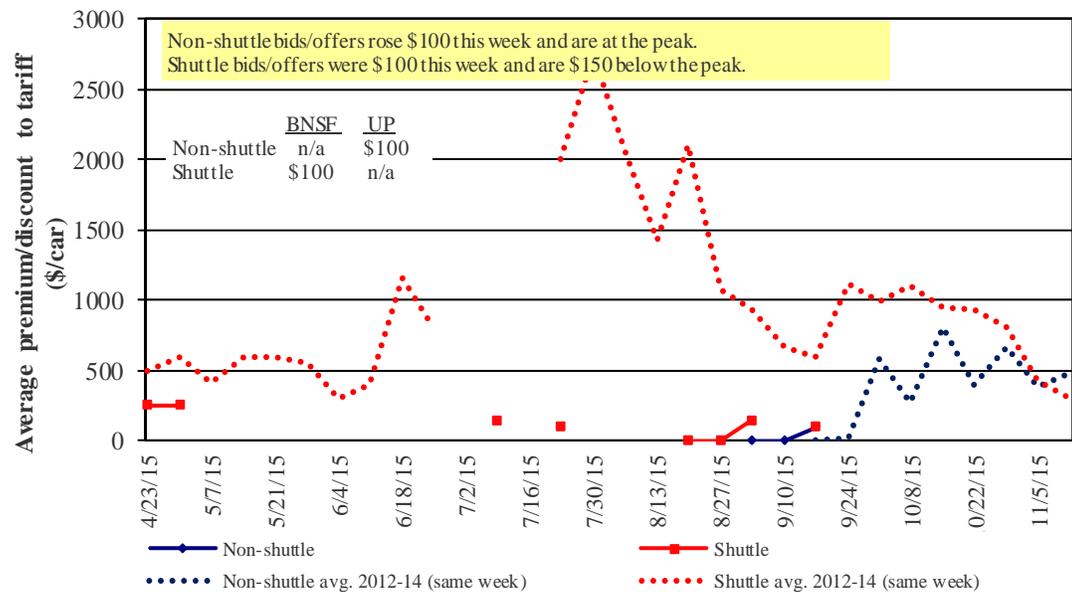


Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 5

Bids/Offers for Railcars to be Delivered in November 2015, Secondary Market

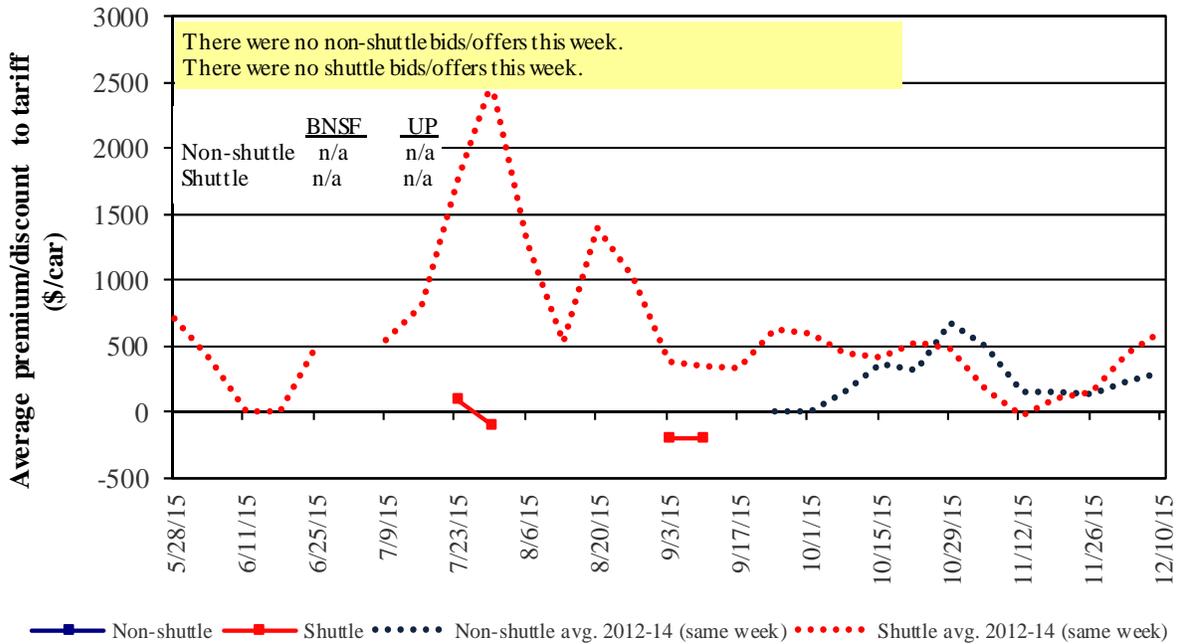


Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 6

Bids/Offers for Railcars to be Delivered in December 2015, Secondary Market



Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 6

Weekly Secondary Railcar Market (\$/car)¹

Week ending	Delivery period					
	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16
Non-shuttle						
BNSF-GF	50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
UP-Pool	38	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	n/a	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2014	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle²						
BNSF-GF	550	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	(13)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2014	(3,550)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
UP-Pool	258	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2014	(2,492)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

¹Average premium/discount to tariff, \$/car-last week

²Shuttle bids are a new data series; prior to this we provided only non-shuttle rates.

Note: Bids listed are market INDICATORS only & are NOT guaranteed prices,

n/a = not available; GF = guaranteed freight; Pool = guaranteed pool

Sources: Transportation and Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Data from James B. Joiner Co., Tradewest Brokerage Co.

The **tariff rail rate** is the base price of freight rail service, and together with **fuel surcharges** and any **auction and secondary rail** values constitute the full cost of shipping by rail. Typically, auction and secondary rail values are a small fraction of the full cost of shipping by rail relative to the tariff rate. High auction and secondary rail values, during times of high rail demand or short supply, can exceed the cost of the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge.

Table 7

Tariff Rail Rates for Unit and Shuttle Train Shipments¹

Effective date:			Tariff	Fuel	Tariff plus surcharge per:		Percent	
9/1/2015	Origin region*	Destination region*	rate/car	surcharge per car	metric ton	bushel ²	change Y/Y ³	
Unit train								
Wheat	Wichita, KS	St. Louis, MO	\$3,605	\$71	\$36.50	\$0.99	3	
	Grand Forks, ND	Duluth-Superior, MN	\$3,563	\$24	\$35.62	\$0.97	-3	
	Wichita, KS	Los Angeles, CA	\$6,950	\$122	\$70.23	\$1.91	4	
	Wichita, KS	New Orleans, LA	\$4,243	\$125	\$43.37	\$1.18	0	
	Sioux Falls, SD	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$6,486	\$100	\$65.41	\$1.78	5	
	Northwest KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$4,511	\$137	\$46.15	\$1.26	0	
	Amarillo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	\$4,710	\$190	\$48.66	\$1.32	-2	
Corn	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$3,328	\$141	\$34.45	\$0.88	-2	
	Toledo, OH	Raleigh, NC	\$5,555	\$0	\$55.16	\$1.40	9	
	Des Moines, IA	Davenport, IA	\$2,168	\$30	\$21.83	\$0.55	2	
	Indianapolis, IN	Atlanta, GA	\$4,761	\$0	\$47.28	\$1.20	9	
	Indianapolis, IN	Knoxville, TN	\$4,104	\$0	\$40.75	\$1.04	12	
	Des Moines, IA	Little Rock, AR	\$3,308	\$88	\$33.72	\$0.86	-1	
Soybeans	Des Moines, IA	Los Angeles, CA	\$4,852	\$255	\$50.72	\$1.29	-13	
	Minneapolis, MN	New Orleans, LA	\$3,844	\$127	\$39.43	\$1.07	0	
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	\$4,676	\$0	\$46.43	\$1.26	17	
	Indianapolis, IN	Raleigh, NC	\$5,625	\$0	\$55.86	\$1.52	9	
	Indianapolis, IN	Huntsville, AL	\$4,368	\$0	\$43.38	\$1.18	22	
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$3,974	\$141	\$40.86	\$1.11	0	
Shuttle Train								
Wheat	Great Falls, MT	Portland, OR	\$3,953	\$70	\$39.95	\$1.09	1	
	Wichita, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$3,919	\$55	\$39.46	\$1.07	7	
	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	\$4,723	\$0	\$46.90	\$1.28	9	
	Grand Forks, ND	Portland, OR	\$5,611	\$122	\$56.93	\$1.55	1	
	Grand Forks, ND	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$6,532	\$127	\$66.12	\$1.80	0	
	Northwest KS	Portland, OR	\$5,478	\$224	\$56.62	\$1.54	-2	
		Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	\$5,180	\$148	\$52.91	\$1.34	-6
Corn	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	\$5,130	\$136	\$52.29	\$1.33	-5	
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$3,147	\$141	\$32.65	\$0.83	-3	
	Lincoln, NE	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$3,610	\$79	\$36.63	\$0.93	-4	
	Des Moines, IA	Amarillo, TX	\$3,645	\$110	\$37.29	\$0.95	-3	
	Minneapolis, MN	Tacoma, WA	\$5,180	\$147	\$52.90	\$1.34	-6	
	Council Bluffs, IA	Stockton, CA	\$4,600	\$152	\$47.19	\$1.20	-6	
	Soybeans	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	\$5,690	\$136	\$57.85	\$1.57	-5
		Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	\$5,710	\$148	\$58.17	\$1.58	-5
		Fargo, ND	Tacoma, WA	\$5,580	\$121	\$56.61	\$1.54	-4
		Council Bluffs, IA	New Orleans, LA	\$4,425	\$162	\$45.56	\$1.24	0
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	\$3,851	\$0	\$38.24	\$1.04	22	
	Grand Island, NE	Portland, OR	\$5,360	\$229	\$55.50	\$1.51	-2	

¹A unit train refers to shipments of at least 25 cars. Shuttle train rates are available for qualified shipments of 75-120 cars that meet railroad efficiency requirements.

²Approximate load per car = 111 short tons (100.7 metric tons): corn 56 lbs./bu., wheat & soybeans 60 lbs./bu.

³Percentage change year over year calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surcharge

Sources: www.bnsf.com, www.cpr.ca, www.csx.com, www.uprr.com

*Regional economic areas defined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Table 8

Tariff Rail Rates for U.S. Bulk Grain Shipments to Mexico

Commodity	Origin state	Destination region	Tariff rate/car ¹	Fuel		Percent change Y/Y ⁴	
				surcharges per car ²	Tariff plus surcharge per: metric ton ³ bushel ³		
Wheat	MT	Chihuahua, CI	\$7,648	\$129	\$79.46	\$2.16	11
	OK	Cuautitlan, EM	\$6,714	\$156	\$70.19	\$1.91	-2
	KS	Guadalajara, JA	\$7,159	\$151	\$74.69	\$2.03	-3
	TX	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$4,086	\$59	\$42.35	\$1.15	2
Corn	IA	Guadalajara, JA	\$8,427	\$178	\$87.92	\$2.23	-2
	SD	Celaya, GJ	\$7,780	\$168	\$81.21	\$2.06	-5
	NE	Queretaro, QA	\$7,618	\$158	\$79.45	\$2.02	-3
	SD	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$6,035	\$128	\$62.97	\$1.60	-4
	MO	Tlalnepantla, EM	\$6,963	\$153	\$72.71	\$1.85	-4
	SD	Torreon, CU	\$7,050	\$141	\$73.47	\$1.86	-2
Soybeans	MO	Bojay (Tula), HG	\$8,365	\$150	\$87.00	\$2.37	-1
	NE	Guadalajara, JA	\$8,929	\$171	\$92.98	\$2.53	-1
	IA	El Castillo, JA	\$9,270	\$167	\$96.43	\$2.62	-2
	KS	Torreon, CU	\$7,226	\$106	\$74.92	\$2.04	0
Sorghum	TX	Guadalajara, JA	\$7,150	\$110	\$74.18	\$1.88	-2
	NE	Celaya, GJ	\$7,404	\$153	\$77.21	\$1.96	-4
	KS	Queretaro, QA	\$7,255	\$96	\$75.11	\$1.91	4
	NE	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$5,883	\$112	\$61.25	\$1.55	2
	NE	Torreon, CU	\$6,662	\$125	\$69.35	\$1.76	0

¹Rates are based upon published tariff rates for high-capacity shuttle trains. Shuttle trains are available for qualified shipments of 75--110 cars that meet railroad efficiency requirements.

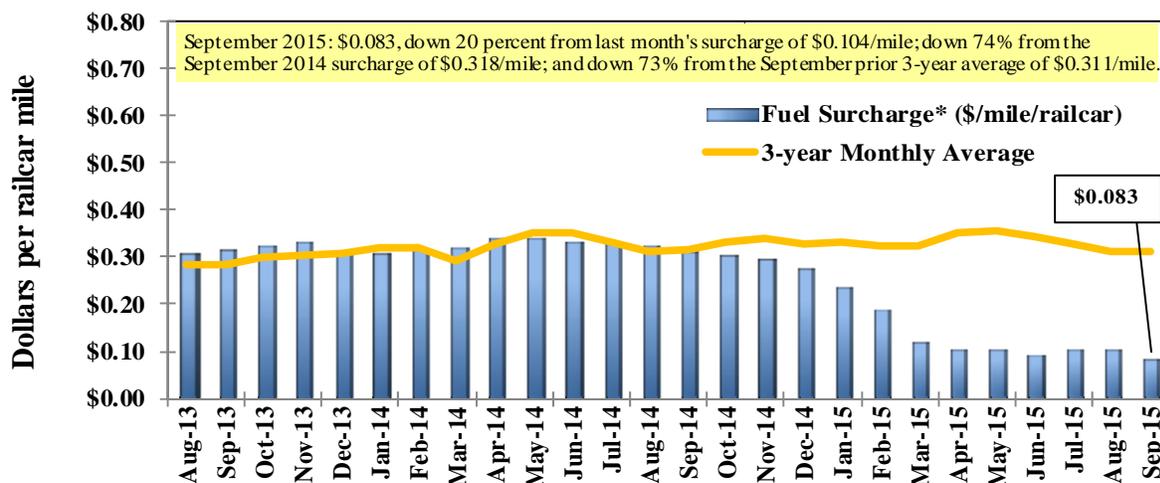
²Fuel surcharge adjusted to reflect the change in Ferrocarril Mexicano, S.A. de C.V railroad fuel surcharge policy as of 10/01/2009

³Approximate load per car = 97.87 metric tons: Corn & Sorghum 56 lbs/bu, Wheat & Soybeans 60 lbs/bu

⁴Percentage change year over year calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surcharge

Sources: www.bnsf.com, www.uprr.com, www.kcsouthern.com

Figure 7

Railroad Fuel Surcharges, North American Weighted Average¹

¹ Weighted by each Class I railroad's proportion of grain traffic for the prior year.

* Mileage-based fuel surcharges for March and April 2007 are estimated. Beginning January 2009, the Canadian Pacific fuel surcharge is computed by a monthly average of the bi-weekly fuel surcharge.

** BNSF strike price (diesel price when fuel surcharges begin) changed from \$1.25/gal. to \$2.50/gal. starting March 1, 2011.

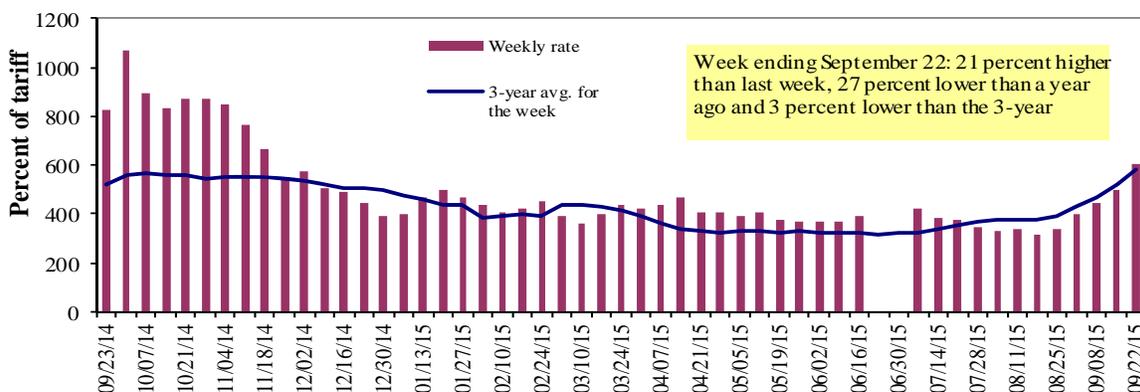
*** CSX strike price changed from \$2.00/gal. to \$3.75/gal. starting January 1, 2015.

Sources: www.bnsf.com, www.cn.ca, www.cpr.ca, www.csx.com, www.kcsi.com, www.nscorp.com, www.uprr.com

Barge Transportation

Figure 8

Illinois River Barge Freight Rate^{1,2}



¹Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); ²4-week moving average of the 3-year average.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 9

Weekly Barge Freight Rates: Southbound Only

		Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Lower Illinois River	St. Louis	Cincinnati	Lower Ohio	Cairo-Memphis
Rate¹	9/22/2015	600	600	603	533	692	692	505
	9/15/2015	513	488	500	450	513	513	388
\$/ton	9/22/2015	37.14	31.92	27.98	21.27	32.45	27.96	15.86
	9/15/2015	31.75	25.96	23.20	17.96	24.06	20.73	12.18
Current week % change from the same week:								
	Last year	-21	-28	-27	-39	-23	-23	-44
	3-year avg. ²	8	6	3	-9	13	13	-17
Rate¹	October	608	608	603	525	647	647	500
	December	-	-	433	328	400	400	292

¹Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); ²4-week moving average; ton = 2,000 pounds; missing data due to winter closure

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 9

Benchmark tariff rates

Calculating barge rate per ton:

(Rate * 1976 tariff benchmark rate per ton)/100

Select applicable index from market quotes included in tables on this page. The 1976 benchmark rates per ton are provided in map.

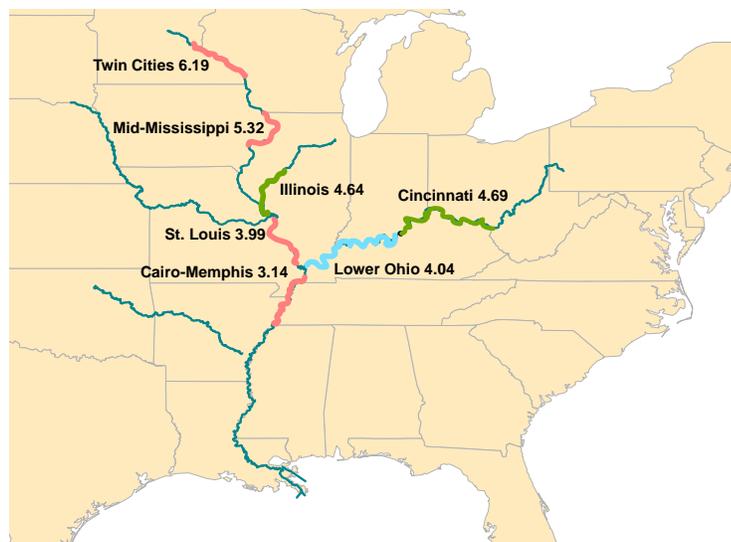
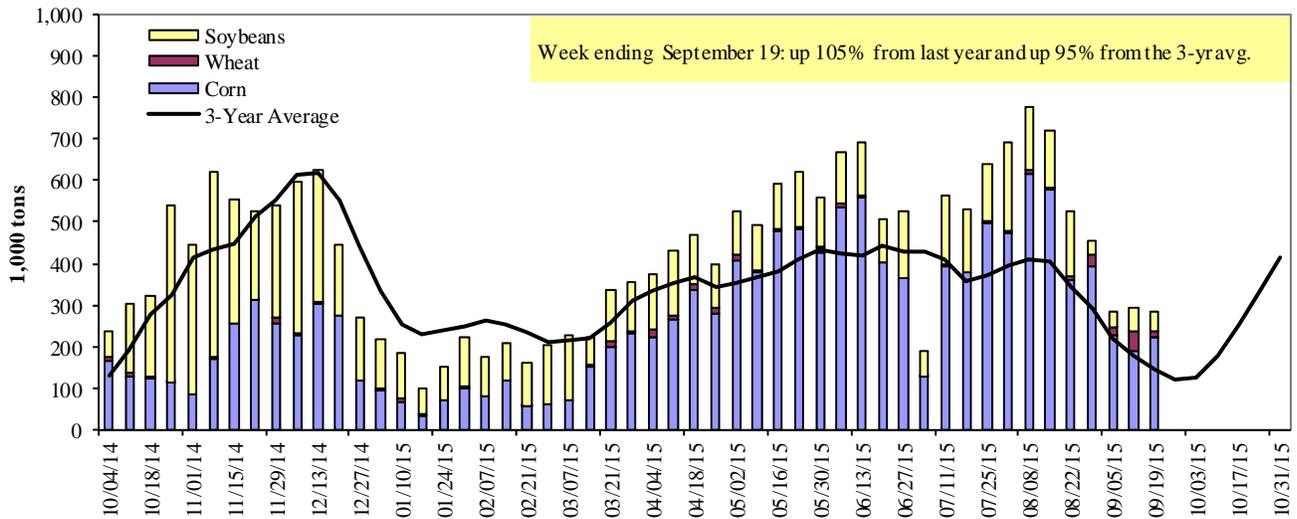


Figure 10

Barge Movements on the Mississippi River¹ (Locks 27 - Granite City, IL)



¹ The 3-year average is a 4-week moving average.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Table 10

Barge Grain Movements (1,000 tons)

Week ending 09/19/2015	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River					
Rock Island, IL (L15)	95	10	5	5	113
Winfield, MO (L25)	161	15	14	14	205
Alton, IL (L26)	226	15	42	13	296
Granite City, IL (L27)	224	15	44	13	296
Illinois River (L8)	89	0	13	0	101
Ohio River (L52)	12	14	9	0	35
Arkansas River (L1)	0	28	7	4	40
Weekly total - 2015	236	58	60	17	371
Weekly total - 2014	245	51	38	10	344
2015 YTD ¹	15,560	1,534	6,863	197	24,154
2014 YTD	16,362	1,982	4,922	160	23,425
2015 as % of 2014 YTD	95	77	139	123	103
Last 4 weeks as % of 2014 ²	98	124	160	121	108
Total 2014	20,693	2,181	11,813	258	34,946

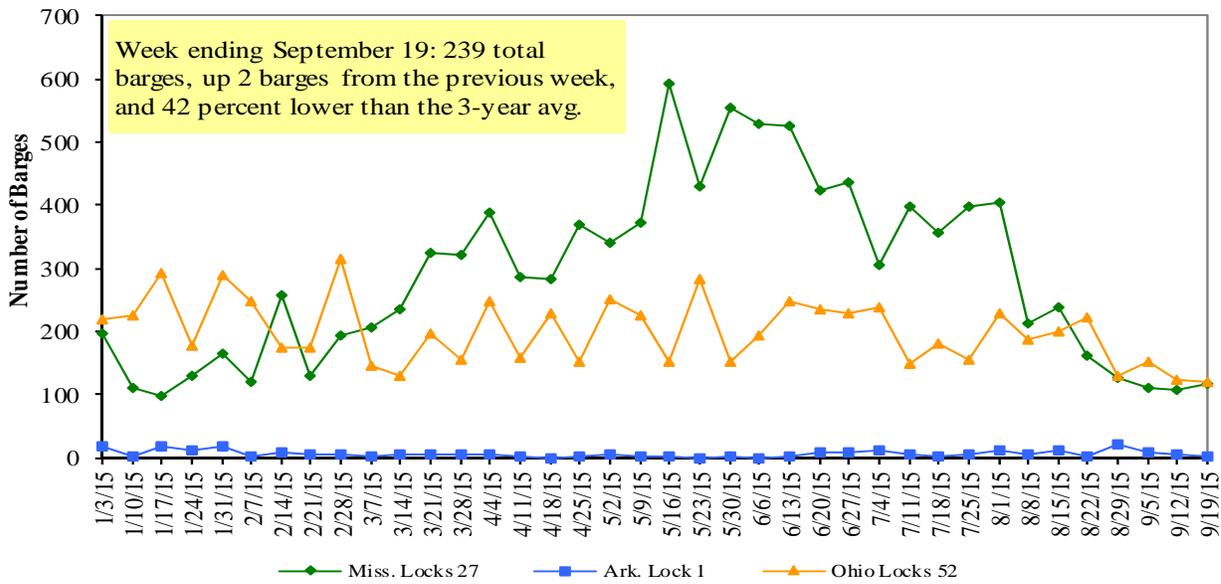
¹ Weekly total, YTD (year-to-date) and calendar year total includes Miss/27, Ohio/52, and Ark/1; "Other" refers to oats, barley, sorghum, and

² As a percent of same period in 2014.

Note: Total may not add exactly, due to rounding

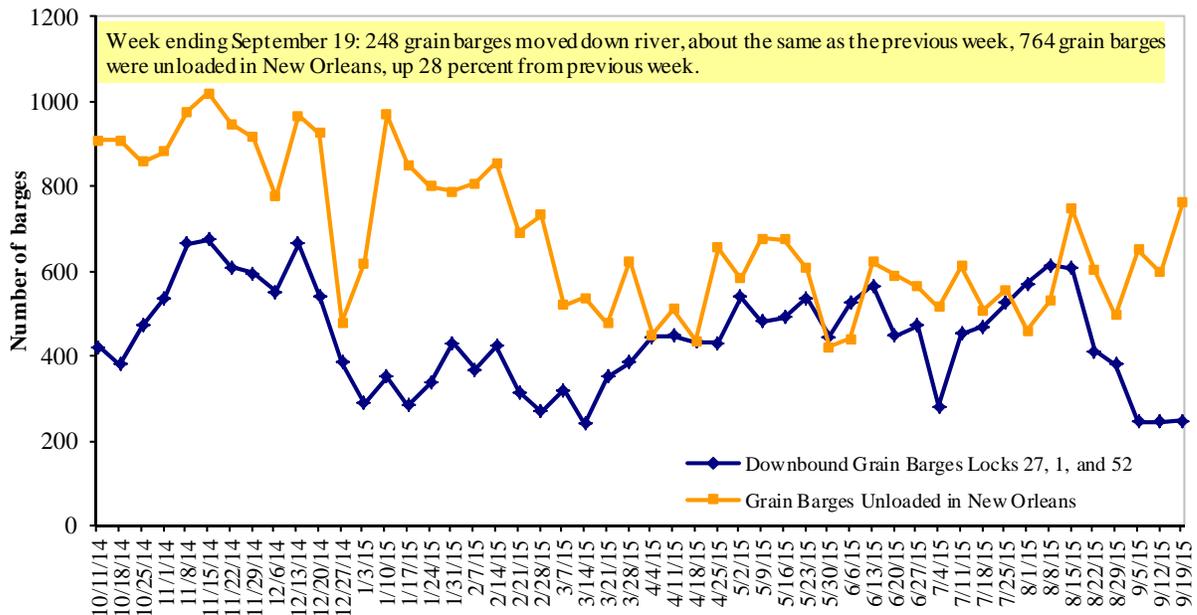
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Figure 11
Upbound Empty Barges Transiting Mississippi River Locks 27, Arkansas River Lock and Dam 1, and Ohio River Locks and Dam 52



Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Figure 12
Grain Barges for Export in New Orleans Region



Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and GIPSA

Truck Transportation

The **weekly diesel price** provides a proxy for trends in U.S. truck rates as diesel fuel is a significant expense for truck grain movements.

Table 11

Retail on-Highway Diesel Prices¹, Week Ending 9/21/2015 (US \$/gallon)

Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	2.548	-0.027	-1.256
	New England	2.613	-0.040	-1.273
	Central Atlantic	2.662	-0.032	-1.224
	Lower Atlantic	2.448	-0.020	-1.274
II	Midwest ²	2.447	-0.024	-1.266
III	Gulf Coast ³	2.340	-0.022	-1.356
IV	Rocky Mountain	2.522	-0.032	-1.319
V	West Coast	2.714	-0.019	-1.276
	West Coast less California	2.550	-0.021	-1.379
	California	2.848	-0.015	-1.193
Total	U.S.	2.493	-0.024	-1.285

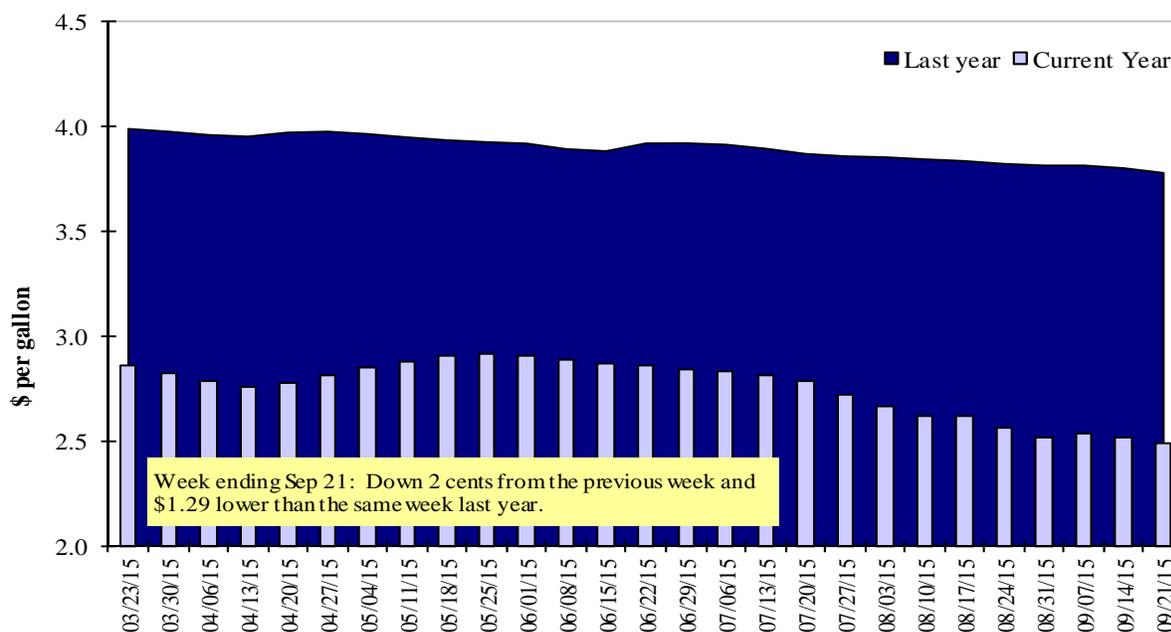
¹Diesel fuel prices include all taxes. Prices represent an average of all types of diesel fuel.

²Same as North Central ³Same as South Central

Source: Energy Information Administration/U.S. Department of Energy (www.eia.doe.gov)

Figure 13

Weekly Diesel Fuel Prices, U.S. Average



Source: Retail On-Highway Diesel Prices, Energy Information Administration, Dept. of Energy

Grain Exports

Table 12

U.S. Export Balances and Cumulative Exports (1,000 metric tons)

Week ending	Wheat					All wheat	Corn	Soybeans	Total
	HRW	SRW	HRS	SWW	DUR				
Export Balances¹									
9/10/2015	1,284	711	1,747	948	163	4,851	8,265	16,584	29,700
This week year ago	1,385	982	1,696	765	68	4,896	11,621	25,188	41,705
Cumulative exports-marketing year²									
2015/16 YTD	1,729	1,274	1,595	934	351	5,883	1,074	392	7,349
2014/15 YTD	2,465	1,375	2,261	1,276	167	7,545	1,418	277	9,240
YTD 2015/16 as % of 2014/15	70	93	71	73	210	78	76	142	80
Last 4 wks as % of same period 2014/15	98	82	108	126	268	105	48	34	46
2014/15 Total	7,009	3,654	7,250	3,758	665	22,336	32,194	46,619	101,149
2013/14 Total	11,465	7,307	6,338	4,367	486	29,963	46,868	44,478	121,309

¹ Current unshipped export sales to date

² Shipped export sales to date; new marketing year now in effect for corn and soybeans

Note: YTD = year-to-date. Marketing Year: wheat = 6/01-5/31, corn & soybeans = 9/01-8/31

Source: Foreign Agricultural Service/USDA (www.fas.usda.gov)

Table 13

Top 5 Importers¹ of U.S. Corn

Week ending 09/10/2015	Total Commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-year avg 2011-2013 - 1,000 mt -
	2015/16 Current MY	2014/15 Last MY		
Japan	1,687	2,478	(32)	10,079
Mexico	3,562	3,173	12	8,145
Korea	123	286	(57)	2,965
Colombia	585	1,172	(50)	3,461
Taiwan	175	214	(18)	1,238
Top 5 Importers	6,132	7,322	(16)	25,887
Total US corn export sales	9,339	13,039	(28)	34,445
% of Projected	20%	27%		
Change from prior week	533	660		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	66%	56%		75%
USDA forecast, September 2015	47,074	47,710	(1)	
Corn Use for Ethanol USDA forecast, September 2015	133,350	132,207	1	

(n) indicates negative number.

¹Based on FAS Marketing Year Ranking Reports - www.fas.usda.gov; Marketing year (MY) = Sep 1 - Aug 31.

²Cumulative Exports (shipped) + Outstanding Sales (unshipped), FAS Weekly Export Sales Report, or Export Sales Query--http://www.fas.usda.gov/esquery/

³FAS Marketing Year Ranking Reports - http://apps.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/myrkaug.htm; 3-yr average

Table 14

Top 5 Importers¹ of U.S. Soybeans

Week Ending 09/10/2015	Total Commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr avg. 2011-13
	2015/16	2014/15		
	Current MY	Last MY		
				- 1,000 mt -
China	6,528	13,882	(53)	24,211
Mexico	986	936	5	2,971
Indonesia	169	550	(69)	1,895
Japan	765	467	64	1,750
Taiwan	318	492	(35)	1,055
Top 5 importers	8,765	16,328	(46)	31,882
Total US soybean export sales	16,976	25,465	(33)	39,169
% of Projected	36%	51%		
Change from prior week	912	1,466		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	52%	64%		81%
USDA forecast, September 2015	47,003	50,000	(6)	

(n) indicates negative number.

¹Based on FAS Marketing Year Ranking Reports - www.fas.usda.gov; Marketing year (MY) = Sep 1 - Aug 31.²Cumulative Exports (shipped) + Outstanding Sales (unshipped), FAS Weekly Export Sales Report, or Export Sales Query--http://www.fas.usda.gov/esrquery/³ FAS Marketing Year Final Reports - www.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/myfi_rpt.htm. (Carryover plus Accumulated Exports)

Table 15

Top 10 Importers¹ of All U.S. Wheat

Week Ending 09/10/2015	Total Commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr avg 2012-2014
	2015/16	2014/15		
	Current MY	Last MY		
				- 1,000 mt -
Japan	1,013	1,384	(27)	3,113
Mexico	1,085	1,475	(26)	2,807
Nigeria	905	1,260	(28)	2,512
Philippines	956	978	(2)	2,105
Brazil	292	1,219	(76)	2,091
Korea	567	725	(22)	1,273
Taiwan	505	518	(3)	1,007
Indonesia	120	295	(59)	751
Colombia	299	315	(5)	662
Thailand	144	164		618
Top 10 importers	5,740	8,171	(30)	16,939
Total US wheat export sales	10,734	12,441	(14)	26,361
% of Projected	44%	53%		
Change from prior week	378	315		
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	53%	66%		64%
USDA forecast, September 2015	24,523	23,270	5	

(n) indicates negative number.

¹ Based on FAS Marketing Year Ranking Reports - www.fas.usda.gov; Marketing year = Jun 1 - May 31.² Cumulative Exports (shipped) + Outstanding Sales (unshipped), FAS Weekly Export Sales Report, or Export Sales Query--http://www.fas.usda.gov/esrquery/³ FAS Marketing Year Final Reports - www.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/myfi_rpt.htm.

Table 16

Grain Inspections for Export by U.S. Port Region (1,000 metric tons)

Port regions	Week ending 09/17/15	Previous Week ¹	Current Week as % of Previous	2015 YTD ¹	2014 YTD ¹	2015 YTD as % of 2014 YTD	Last 4-weeks as % of		Total ¹ 2014
							2014	3-yr. avg.	
Pacific Northwest									
Wheat	309	174	178	7,825	9,340	84	81	72	12,436
Corn	115	117	99	6,875	7,065	97	75	251	7,781
Soybeans	0	0	n/a	4,087	4,502	91	102	54	12,887
Total	424	291	146	18,787	20,907	90	79	96	33,104
Mississippi Gulf									
Wheat	174	244	71	3,493	3,658	95	137	91	4,495
Corn	398	334	119	21,672	23,183	93	86	112	30,912
Soybeans	500	364	137	13,168	11,051	119	200	125	29,087
Total	1,072	943	114	38,333	37,892	101	112	111	64,495
Texas Gulf									
Wheat	94	106	88	2,892	4,763	61	76	58	6,120
Corn	0	47	0	450	453	99	146	261	580
Soybeans	0	0	n/a	210	257	82	n/a	0	949
Total	94	154	61	3,552	5,474	65	82	66	7,649
Interior									
Wheat	33	45	74	1,051	1,034	102	59	93	1,400
Corn	166	178	93	4,533	4,170	109	91	155	5,677
Soybeans	27	24	112	2,129	2,364	90	86	116	4,312
Total	226	247	92	7,713	7,568	102	62	127	11,389
Great Lakes									
Wheat	11	83	13	723	447	162	183	181	935
Corn	10	31	32	416	194	215	92	480	288
Soybeans	0	0	n/a	86	51	170	n/a	0	988
Total	21	114	18	1,225	691	177	140	223	2,211
Atlantic									
Wheat	16	36	44	415	414	100	57	55	553
Corn	32	0	n/a	147	633	23	50	85	816
Soybeans	2	4	68	965	998	97	507	119	2,119
Total	50	40	127	1,527	2,045	75	59	69	3,487
U.S. total from ports²									
Wheat	637	688	92	16,399	19,657	83	91	77	25,939
Corn	721	708	102	34,093	35,698	96	86	136	46,054
Soybeans	529	392	135	20,645	19,223	107	190	122	50,342
Total	1,887	1,788	106	71,137	74,577	95	97	105	122,335

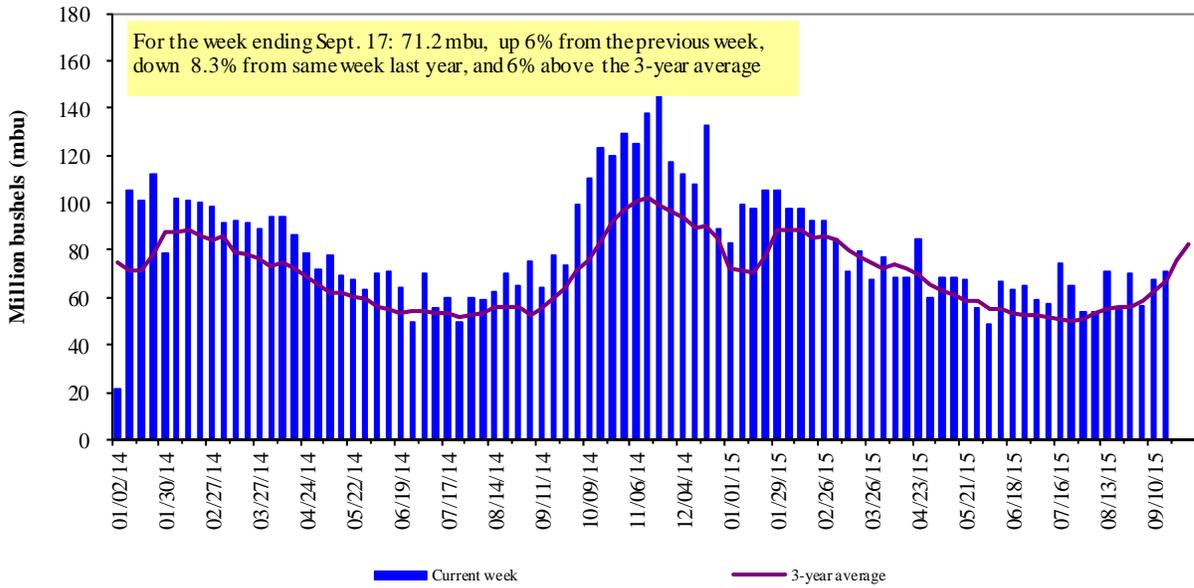
¹ Data includes revisions from prior weeks; some regional totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

Source: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration/USDA (www.gipsa.usda.gov); YTD= year-to-date; n/a = not applicable

The United States exports approximately one-quarter of the grain it produces. On average, this includes nearly 45 percent of U.S.-grown wheat, 35 percent of U.S.-grown soybeans, and 20 percent of the U.S.-grown corn. Approximately 59 percent of the U.S. export grain shipments departed through the U.S. Gulf region in 2014.

Figure 14

U.S. grain inspected for export (wheat, corn, and soybeans)

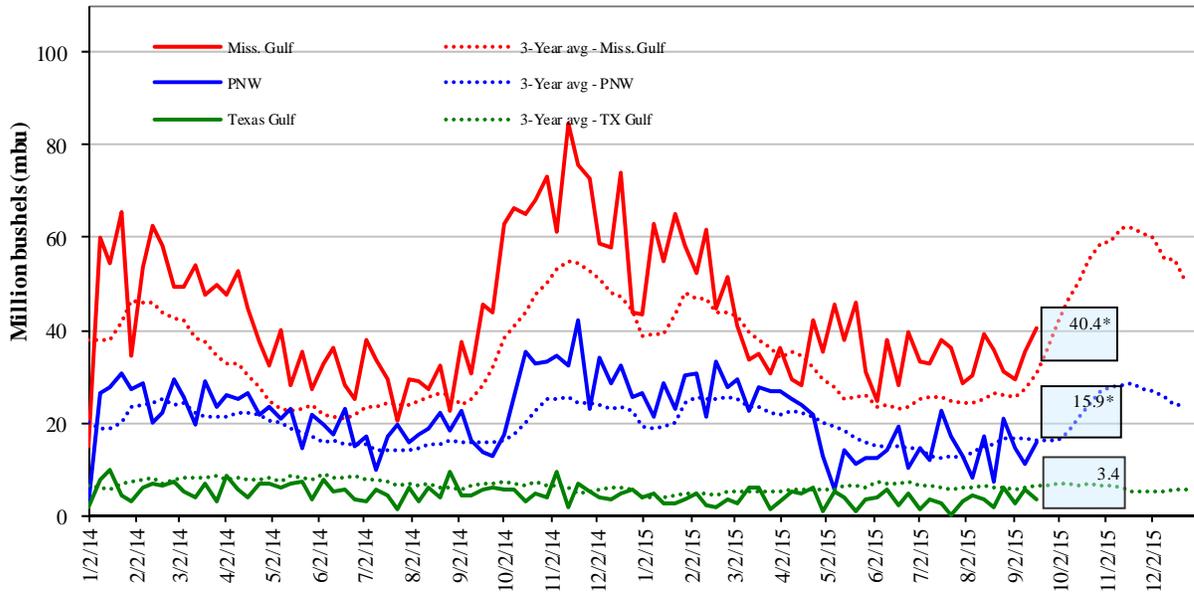


Source: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration/USDA (www.gipsa.usda.gov)

Note: 3-year average consists of 4-week running average

Figure 15

U.S. Grain Inspections: U.S. Gulf and PNW¹ (wheat, corn, and soybeans)



Source: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration/USDA (www.gipsa.usda.gov); *mbu, this week.

September 17: % change from:	MS Gulf	TX Gulf	U.S. Gulf	PNW
Last week	up 14	down 40	up 6	up 45
Last year (same week)	down 12	down 41	down 15	up 17
3-yr avg. (4-wk mov. avg.)	up 31	down 49	up 17	up 10

Ocean Transportation

Table 17

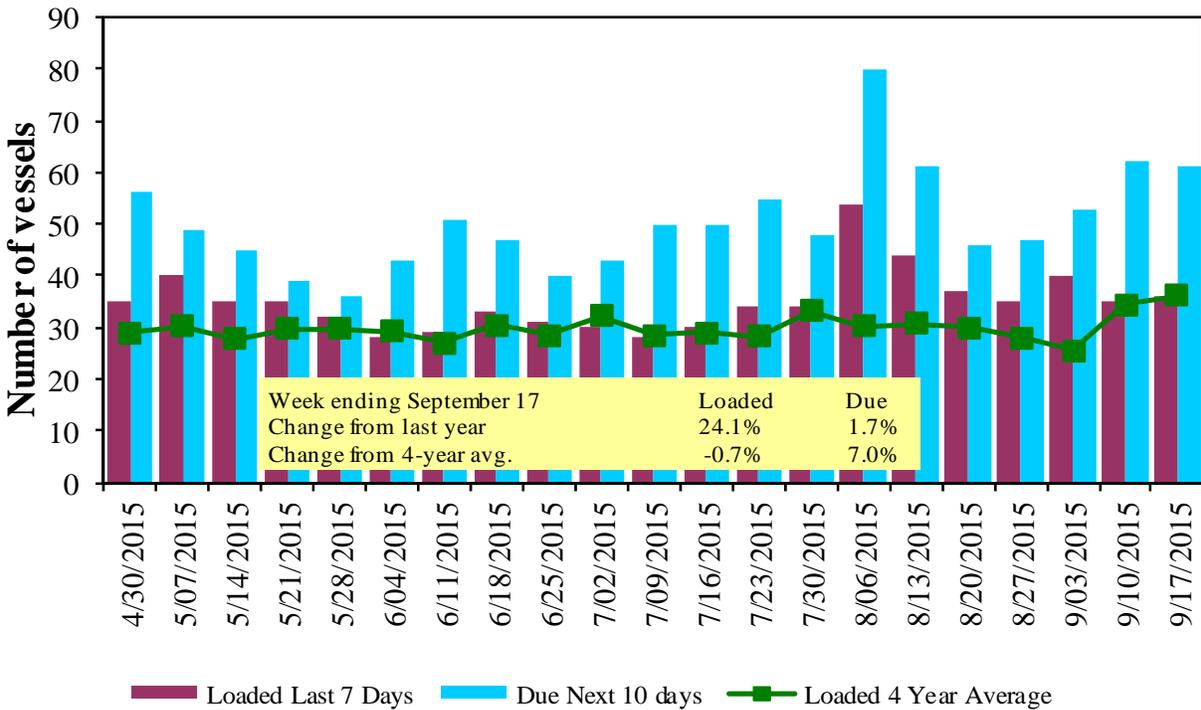
Weekly Port Region Grain Ocean Vessel Activity (number of vessels)

Date	Gulf			Pacific Northwest	Vancouver B.C.
	In port	Loaded 7-days	Due next 10-days	In port	In port
9/17/2015	46	36	61	8	n/a
9/10/2015	38	35	62	9	n/a
2014 range	(18..88)	(24..52)	(27..97)	(6..26)	n/a
2014 avg.	47	39	60	15	n/a

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 16

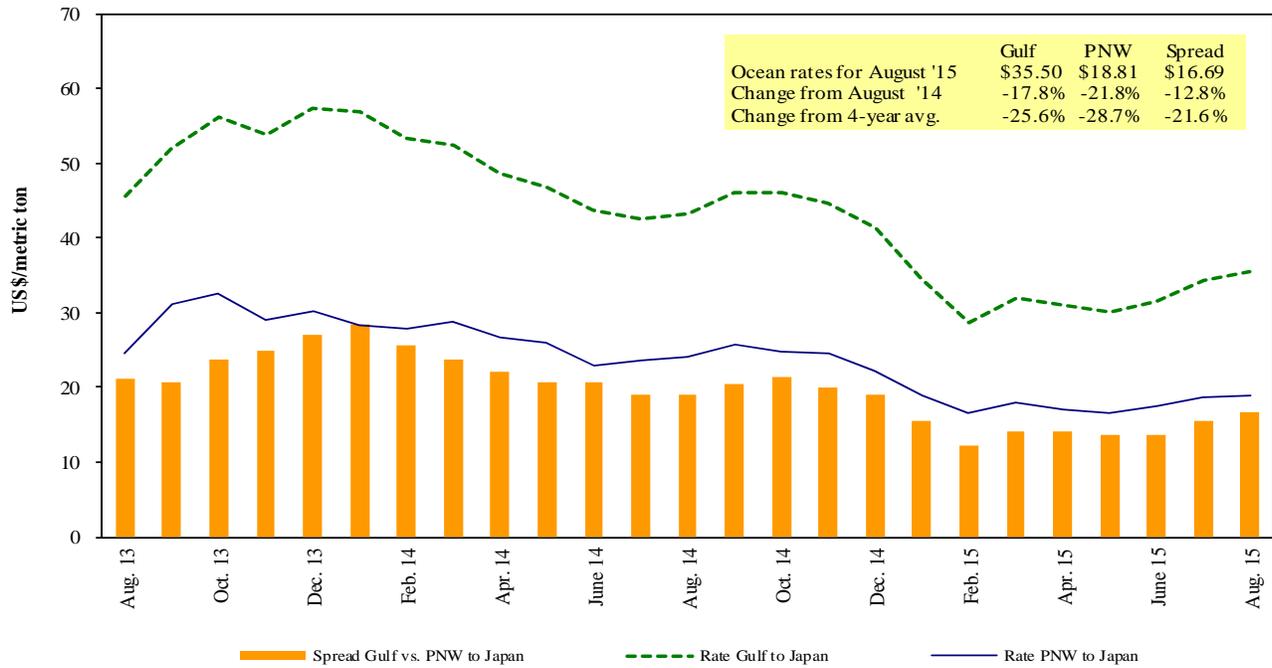
U.S. Gulf¹ Vessel Loading Activity



Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA
¹U.S. Gulf includes Mississippi, Texas, and East Gulf.

Figure 17

Grain Vessel Rates, U.S. to Japan



Data Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting

Table 18

Ocean Freight Rates For Selected Shipments, Week Ending 09/19/2015

Export region	Import region	Grain types	Loading date	Volume loads (metric tons)	Freight rate (US\$/metric ton)
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Oct 5/15	55,000	32.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Oct 5/15	55,000	31.50
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Sep 30/ Oct 4	55,000	32.25
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 1/30	55,000	34.50
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Sep 10/20	58,000	36.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Sept 20/25	58,000	32.50
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Sep 1/10	60,000	33.00
U.S. Gulf	Guatemala ¹	Corn	Jul 20/30	10,000	108.18
U.S. Gulf	Isreal	Grain	Aug 21/28	32,000	25.00
PNW	Yemen	Heavy Grain	Oct 1/20	55,000	26.00
Australia	Yemen	Heavy Grain	Oct 1/20	55,000	18.00
Black Sea	Saudi Arabia	Grain	Aug 15/20	60,000	26.25
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Sep 20/30	60,000	24.25
Brazil	China	Grain	Aug 10/30	60,000	25.25
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Aug 15/25	60,000	24.50
EC S. America	China	Grain	Sep 25/Oct 5	65,000	22.50
France	Algeria	Wheat	Sep 8/10	23,500	17.50
France	Algeria	Heavy Grain	Sep 5/10	25,000	18.00
Latvia	Algeria	Grain	Sep 1/5	45,000	19.25
Lithuania	Sp Mediterranean	Grain	Sep 10/14	25,000	19.50
River Plate	Jordan	Corn	Aug 15/20	35,000	41.00

Rates shown are for metric ton (2,204.62 lbs. = 1 metric ton), F.O.B., except where otherwise indicates; op = option

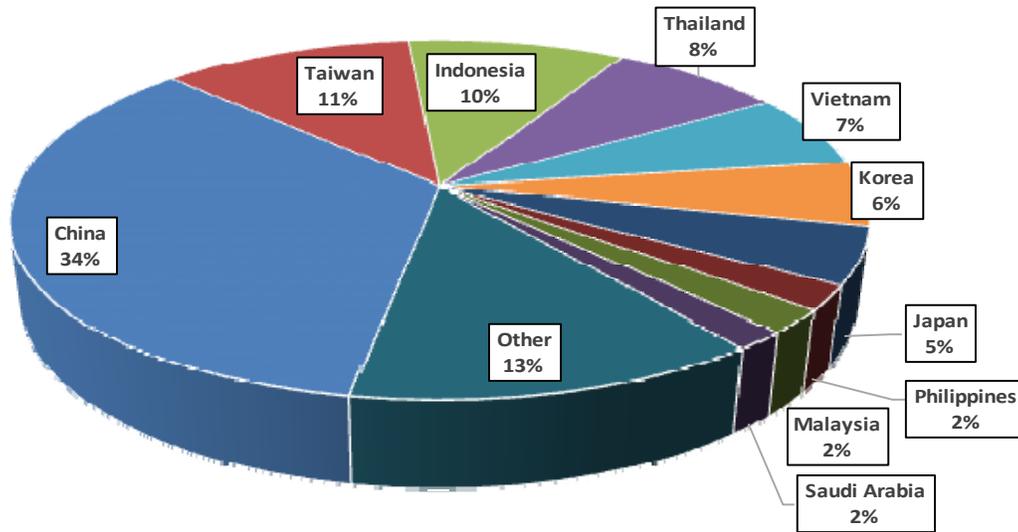
¹50 percent of food aid from the United States is required to be shipped on U.S.-flag vessels.

Source: Maritime Research Inc. (www.maritime-research.com)

In 2014, containers were used to transport 7 percent of total U.S. waterborne grain exports. Approximately 63 percent of U.S. waterborne grain exports in 2014 went to Asia, of which 11 percent were moved in containers. Approximately 95 percent of U.S. waterborne containerized grain exports were destined for Asia.

Figure 18

Top 10 Destination Markets for U.S. Containerized Grain Exports, January-June 2015

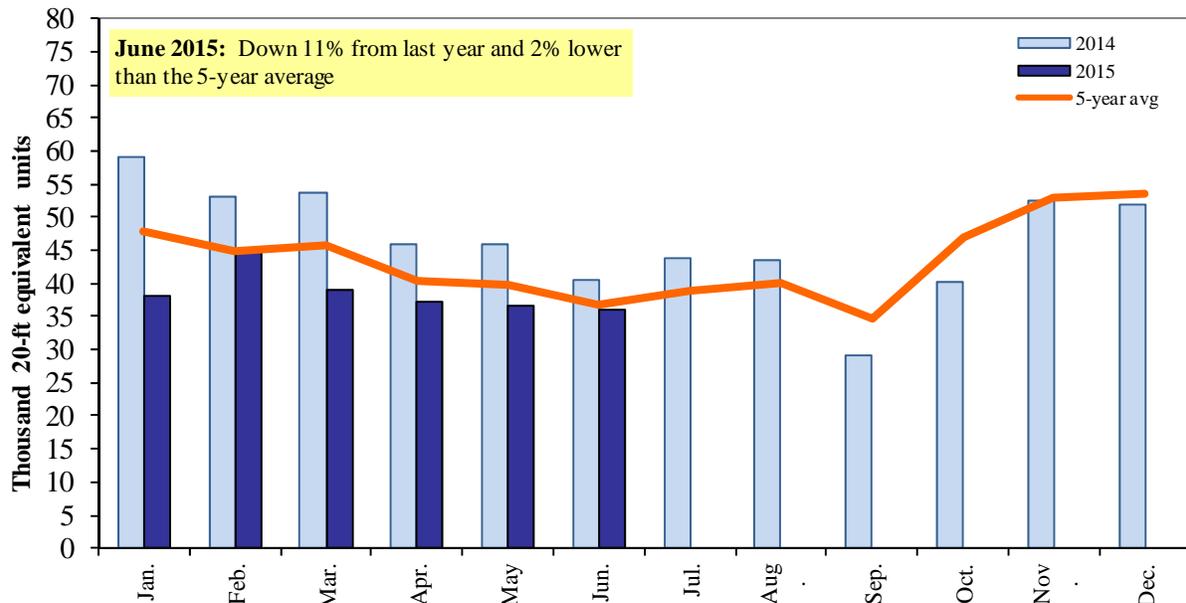


Source: USDA/Agricultural Marketing Service/Transportation Services Division analysis of Port Import Export Reporting Service (PIERS) data

Note: The following Harmonized Tariff Codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 100190, 100200, 100300, 100400, 100590, 100700, 110100, 230310, 110220, 110290, 120100, 230210, 230990, 230330, and 120810.

Figure 19

Monthly Shipments of Containerized Grain to Asia



Source: USDA/Agricultural Marketing Service/Transportation Services Division analysis of Port Import Export Reporting Service (PIERS) data.

Note: The following Harmonized Tariff Codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 100190, 100200, 100300, 100400, 100590, 100700, 110100, 230310, 110220, 110290, 120100, 230210, 230990, 230330, and 120810.

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