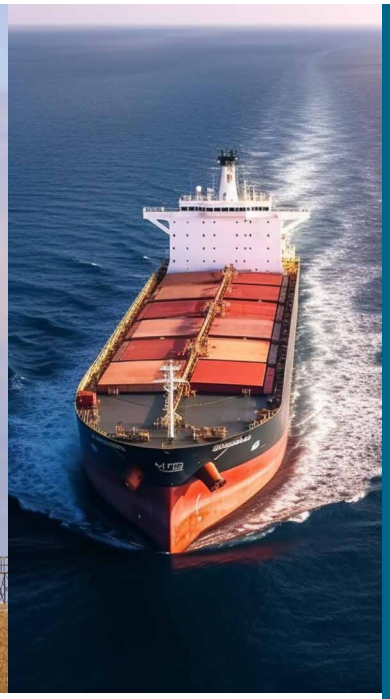
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Grain Transportation Report

Contents

Weekly Highlights 2
Snapshots by Sector 3
Feature Article 4
Grain Transportation Indicators 8
Rail Transportation 10
Barge Transportation 18
Truck Transportation 22
Grain Exports 23
Ocean Transportation 27
Contacts and Links 30

September 24, 2026
A weekly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service
www.ams.usda.gov/GTR

STB Denies Motions for Summary Denial of UP/NS Merger Application. On September 18, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) denied motions for summary denial of the revised Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern (UP/NS) merger application (*Grain Transportation Report (GTR), August 20, 2026, first highlight*).

Last month, BNSF Railway, CSX Transportation, a coalition of shipper associations, and others argued that— under STB's 2001 Major Merger Rules—UP/NS failed to present enough initial evidence that the merger would be in the public interest. UP/NS defended their position.

STB's decision noted, "[a]lthough the motions and comments raise important questions and issues," the agency's "determination" in the proceeding "will be better informed by a more complete record." In concurring with STB's unanimous decision, one Board member observed that commenting stakeholders "have raised significant, compelling arguments," and UP/NS "still have a long way to go to show that the Transaction is in the public interest."

To fully participate in the proceeding, parties must file a notice of intent to participate by September 30. Comments and requests for conditions are due by November 18.

PNW Corn Exports Show Late-Season Strength. According to USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service, 705,917 metric tons of corn, loaded onto 11 ships, was inspected for export from Pacific Northwest (PNW) terminals during the week ending September 17 (GTR table 18). Eighty percent was destined to Japan, and 20 percent was destined to South Korea.

This PNW corn-export total marked an all-time record for the same week and the third-largest weekly total so far in 2026—reflecting a record corn crop last fall. The strength of PNW corn exports was evident in strong rail grain carloads (GTR fig. 3)—up 16 percent from last year and up 30 percent from the prior 3-year average.

U.S. farmers have already begun harvesting this year's crop, and starting next month, rail tariff rates from the western Corn Belt to PNW export terminals will rise by $200 per car for BNSF-served origins and $225 per car for CPKC-served origins (GTR, September 17, 2026).

BNSF Holds Shuttle and Direct DET Auctions for 2027. On September 23, BNSF Railway (BNSF) held an auction for 13 yearlong shuttle trains—all set to begin in January 2027. BNSF sold the 13 shuttle train contracts for a combined $17.2 million, and winning bids averaged $1.3 million per shuttle contract. This average was more than twice as much as last year's auction results—when January 2026 shuttle auctions averaged $595,000 per shuttle train contract.

Also, on September 22, BNSF sold three 4-month direct domestic efficiency train (Direct DET) contracts that begin in March 2027. The winning bids averaged just over $100,000 per contract. Direct DETs are similar to shuttle trains, except they cannot unload at Pacific Northwest export terminals and their contracts are shorter (i.e., 4 months) and do not feature loading/unloading incentives.

Diesel Price Reaches New High. For the week ending September 21, the U.S. average diesel fuel price rose 24.4 cents from the previous week to $6.529 per gallon—marking the ninth such increase in 11 weeks. Last week's price was 278.0 cents above the same week last year and nearly a $2-per-gallon jump since early July. Diesel prices in the Midwest averaged $6.68 per gallon in the week ending September 21—294.9 cents above the same week last year.

For additional transportation news related to grain and other agricultural products, see the Transportation Updates and Regulatory News page on AgTransport. A dataset of all news entries since January 2023 is also available on AgTransport.

Export Sales

For the week ending September 17, **unshipped balances** of corn, soybeans, and wheat for marketing year (MY) 2026/27 totaled 36.60 million metric tons (mmt), down 4 percent from last week and up 28 percent from the same time last year.

Net **corn export sales** for MY 2026/27 were 0.84 mmt, down 5 percent from last week. Net **soybean export sales** were 0.58 mmt, down 66 percent from last week. Net **wheat export sales** were 0.27 mmt, down 18 percent from last week.

Rail

U.S. Class I railroads originated 28,001 **grain carloads** during the week ending September 12. This was a 2-percent increase from the previous week, 16 percent more than last year, and 30 percent more than the 3-year average.

Average September **shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers** (per car) were $525 above tariff for the week ending September 17. This was $67 less than last week and $228 more than this week last year. Average non-shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers per car were $113 above tariff. This was $13 more than last week and $38 more than this week last year.

Barge

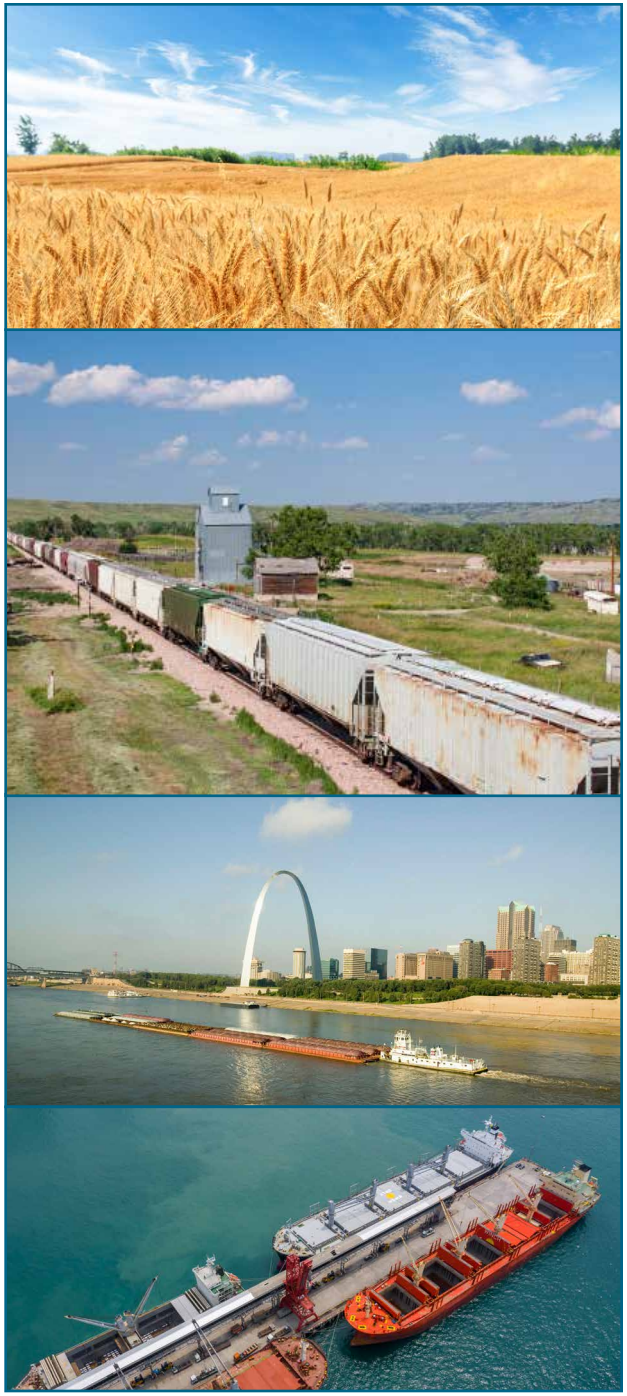
For the week ending September 19, **barged grain movements** totaled 376,954 tons. This was 14 percent less than the previous week and 44 percent more than the same week last year.

For the week ending September 19, 241 **barges moved down river**, 74 less than the previous week. There were 799 grain barges unloaded in the New Orleans region, 10 percent more than the previous week.

Ocean

For the week ending September 17, 28 **oceangoing grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf—24 percent fewer than the same period last year. Within the next 10 days (starting September 18), 51 vessels were expected to be loaded—21 percent more than the same period last year.

As of September 17, the rate for shipping a metric ton (mt) of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was $76.75, unchanged from the previous week. The rate from the Pacific Northwest to Japan was $37.00 per mt, down 2 percent from the previous week.



Second-Quarter 2026 Wheat Transportation Costs Rise From Previous Quarter and a Year Ago

From first to second quarter 2026 (quarter to quarter), costs rose for transporting wheat to Japan from Kansas (KS) and North Dakota (ND) through the Pacific Northwest (PNW routes) and the U.S. Gulf (Gulf routes). Transportation costs also increased for all routes from second quarter 2025 to second quarter 2026 (year to year). Both quarter to quarter and year to year, total landed costs (farm values plus transportation costs) increased.

Transportation Costs

For the KS-PNW route to Japan, wheat transportation costs rose 11 percent quarter to quarter and rose 9 percent year to year. For the ND-PNW route, costs were up 10 percent quarter to quarter and up 14 percent year to year.

For the KS-Gulf route to Japan, wheat transportation costs were up 16 percent quarter to quarter and up 23 percent year to year. For the ND-Gulf route, costs rose 15 percent quarter to quarter and rose 25 percent year to year.

The quarter-to-quarter increases in transportation costs were due to higher truck, rail, and ocean freight rates for Kansas and North Dakota wheat. The year-to-year increases in costs stemmed from rises in truck and ocean freight rates for Kansas wheat and rises in truck, rail, and ocean freight rates for North Dakota wheat.

Table 1. Quarterly rate comparisons for shipping Kansas and North Dakota wheat to Japan through the PNW

Mode	Kansas					North Dakota				
	2025 2nd qtr	2026 1st qtr	2026 2nd qtr	Year-to-year change	Quarterly change	2025 2nd qtr	2026 1st qtr	2026 2nd qtr	Year-to-year change	Quarterly change
	$/metric ton					$/metric ton				
Truck	6.49	7.26	7.27	12.02	0.14	18.07	17.63	18.71	3.54	6.13
Rail	65.28	59.28	64.00	-1.96	7.96	58.90	59.59	63.60	7.98	6.73
Ocean vessel	27.12	30.68	36.25	33.67	18.16	27.12	30.68	36.25	33.67	18.16
Transportation costs	98.89	97.22	107.52	8.73	10.59	104.09	107.90	118.56	13.90	9.88
Farm value	183.96	176.25	209.81	14.05	19.04	211.15	201.48	204.91	-2.96	1.70
Total landed cost	282.85	273.47	317.33	12.19	16.04	315.24	309.38	323.47	2.61	4.55
Transport % of landed cost	34.96	35.55	33.88	-3.09	-4.69	33.02	34.88	36.65	11.00	5.09

Table 2. Quarterly rate comparisons for shipping Kansas and North Dakota wheat to Japan through the U.S. Gulf

Mode	Kansas					North Dakota				
	2025 2nd qtr	2026 1st qtr	2026 2nd qtr	Year-to-year change	Quarterly change	2025 2nd qtr	2026 1st qtr	2026 2nd qtr	Year-to-year change	Quarterly change
	$/metric ton					$/metric ton				
Truck	6.49	7.26	7.27	12.02	0.14	18.07	17.63	18.71	3.54	6.13
Rail	44.60	41.17	43.46	-2.56	5.56	55.36	58.29	62.25	12.45	6.79
Ocean vessel	46.42	54.93	69.27	49.22	26.11	46.42	54.93	69.27	49.22	26.11
Transportation costs	97.51	103.36	120.00	23.06	16.10	119.85	130.85	150.23	25.35	14.81
Farm value	183.96	176.25	209.81	14.05	19.04	211.15	201.48	204.91	-2.96	1.70
Total landed cost	281.47	279.61	329.81	17.17	17.95	331.00	332.33	355.14	7.29	6.86
Transport % of landed cost	34.64	36.97	36.38	5.03	-1.57	36.21	39.37	42.30	16.83	7.44

Note: Rail tariff rates include fuel surcharges and revisions for heavy-axle railcars and shuttle trains. The rail tariff rate is a base price of rail freight rates, but during periods of high rail demand or car shortages, high auction and secondary market rates discontinued. USDA/AMS data for the Kansas to PNW rate (via BNSF) begins in June 2024. All quarters reflect changes in fuel surcharges. USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service is the source for wheat prices for North Dakota (mainly hard red spring) and Kansas (mainly hard red winter).
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Ocean Freight Rates. Ocean freight rates for shipping wheat from the PNW were up 18 percent quarter to quarter, because of strong demand for dry bulk cargo, and up 34 percent year to year, because of strong export demand (Grain Transportation Report (GTR), July 30, 2026). Gulf-route ocean freight rates increased 26 percent from quarter to quarter and rose 49 percent from year to year.

Rail Freight Rates. For the KS-PNW route, rail rates for shipping wheat were up 8 percent quarter to quarter and down 2 percent year to year. For the ND-PNW route, rail rates were up 7 percent quarter to quarter and up 8 percent year to year.

For the KS-Gulf route, rail rates were up 6 percent quarter to quarter and down 3 percent year to year. For the ND-Gulf route, rail rates were up 7 percent quarter to quarter and up 12 percent year to year.

Truck Freight Rates. From Kansas origins, trucking rates increased less than 1 percent quarter to quarter and rose 12 percent year to year. From North Dakota origins, rates rose 6 percent quarter to quarter and rose 4 percent year to year. In second quarter 2026, the U.S. weekly diesel fuel price rose quarter to quarter and year to year. U.S average diesel prices responded to conflict in the Middle East by falling throughout most of the second quarter (GTR, July 30, 2026).

Total Landed Costs

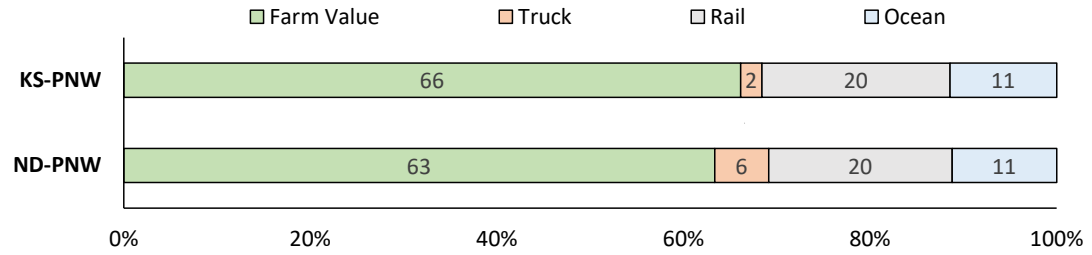
Both quarter to quarter and year to year, total landed costs were up for all Gulf and PNW routes.

For Kansas wheat, both the quarter-to-quarter and year-to-year increases were due to higher transportation costs and farm values.

For North Dakota wheat, the quarter-to-quarter increase in total landed costs owed to higher farm values and transportation costs. The year-to-year rise stemmed from higher truck, rail, and ocean freight rates (tables 1 and 2).

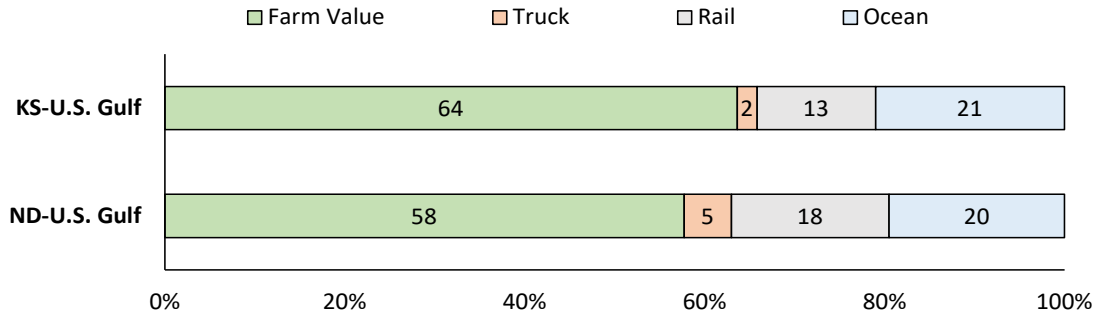
PNW Routes. In second quarter 2026, total landed costs for shipping to Japan were $317/metric ton (mt) for the KS-PNW route and $323/mt for the ND-PNW route. KS-PNW-route transportation costs represented 34 percent of total landed costs, and this share was down both quarter to quarter and year to year. ND-PNW-route transportation costs were 37 percent of total landed costs, and this share was up both quarter to quarter and year to year (fig. 1 and table 1).

Figure 1. Total landed costs for shipping wheat (Pacific Northwest) to Japan, second quarter 2026



Note: PNW = Pacific Northwest; KS = Kansas; ND = North Dakota.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 2. Total landed costs for shipping wheat (U.S. Gulf) to Japan, second quarter 2026



Note: PNW = Pacific Northwest; KS = Kansas; ND = North Dakota.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

U.S. Gulf Routes. Second-quarter 2026 total landed costs for shipping to Japan were $330/mt for the KS-Gulf route and $355/mt for the ND-Gulf route. Second-quarter transportation costs were 36 percent of the total KS-Gulf-route landed costs, and this share was down quarter to quarter and up year to year. ND-Gulf-route transportation costs were 42 percent of total landed costs, and this share was up both quarter to quarter and year to year (fig. 2 and table 2).

U.S. Wheat Exports

According to USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service's Global Agricultural Trade System data, in second quarter 2026, the United States exported to Japan 0.5 mmt of wheat—down 26 percent quarter to quarter and down 7 percent year to year.

According to USDA's September *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates*, the projected total of U.S. wheat exports for marketing year (MY) 2026/27—21.09 mmt—was unchanged from the August projection and down 15 percent from the estimate for MY 2025/26.

Bernadette.Winston@usda.gov

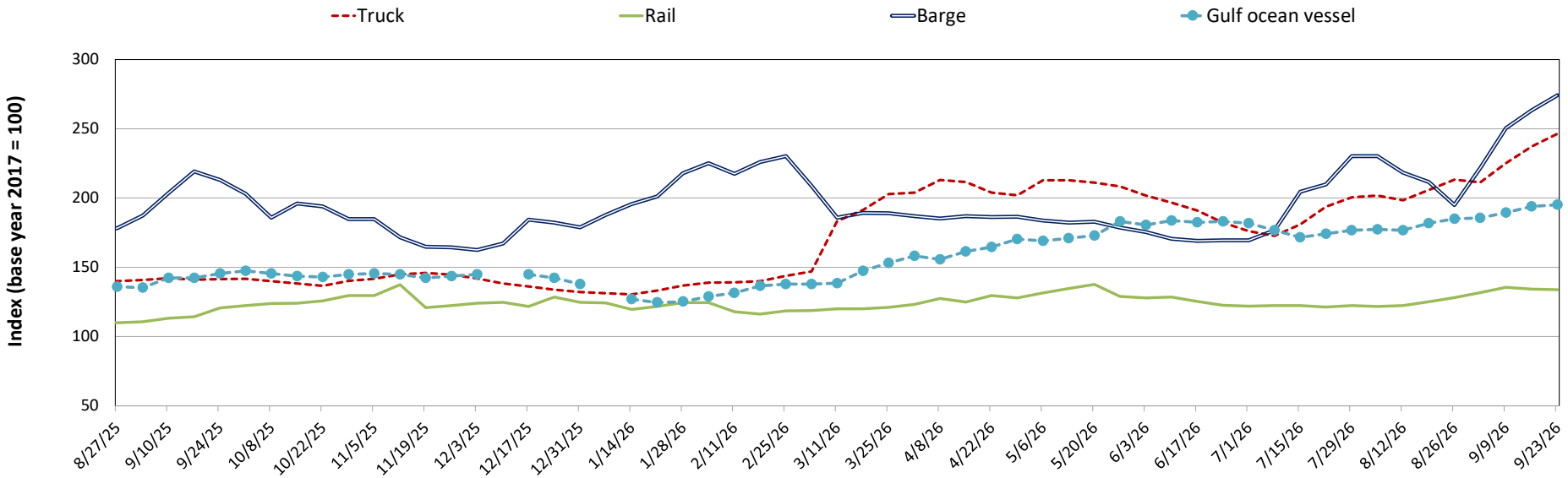
Grains are transported to the domestic and international markets via one or more of the following modes: truck, rail, barge, and oceangoing vessel. Monitoring the cost of transportation for each mode is vital to the marketing decision making process.

Table 1. Grain transport cost indicators

For the week ending:	Truck	Rail	Barge	Ocean	
				Gulf	Pacific
09/23/26	246	134	274	195	176
09/16/26	237	134	263	195	179
09/24/25	141	121	213	147	141

Note: Base year 2017 = 100. Weekly updates include truck = diesel ($/gallon); rail = near-month secondary rail market value and monthly tariff rate with fuel surcharge for select shuttle train routes ($/car); barge = Illinois River barge rate (index = percent of tariff rate); ocean = routes to Japan ($/metric ton); n/a = not available.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

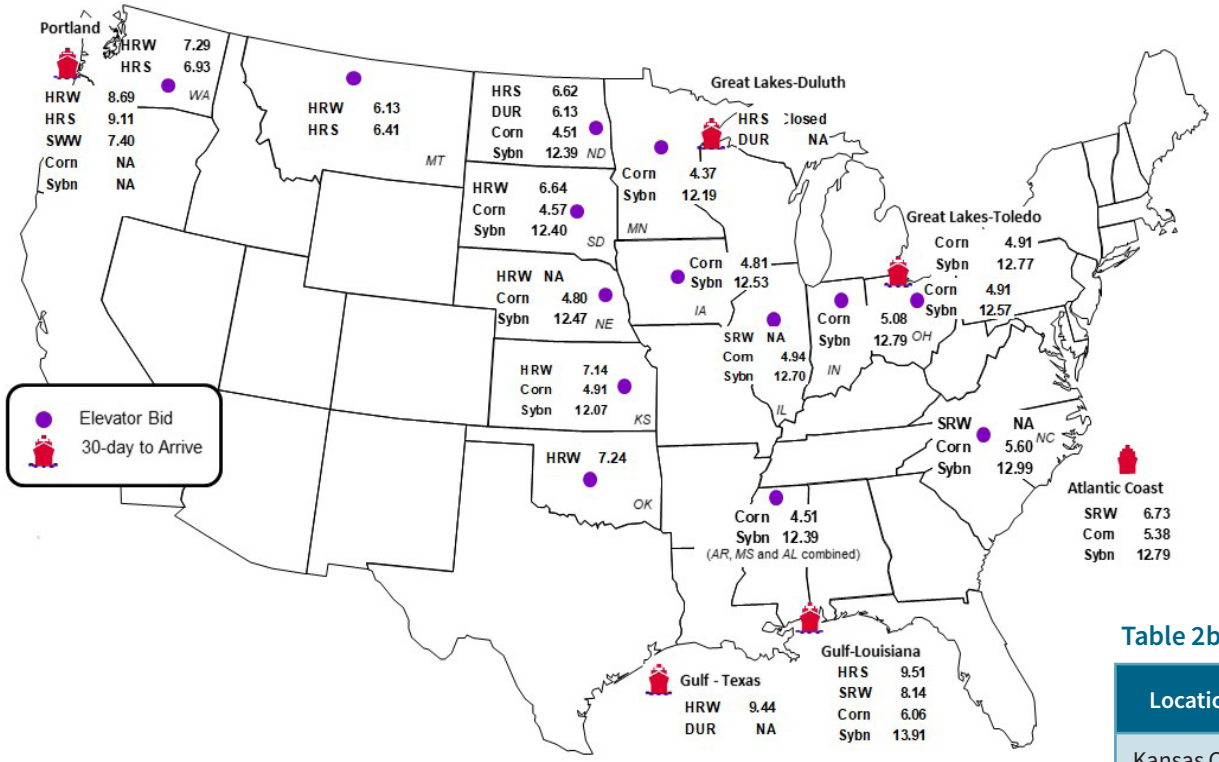
Figure 1. Grain transportation cost indicators as of week ending 09/23/26



Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 2. Grain bid summary

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.



Inland bids: 12% HRW, 14% HRS, #1 SRW, #1 DUR, #1 SWW, #2 Y Corn, #1 Y Soybeans
Export bids: Ord HRW, 14% HRS, #2 SRW, #2 DUR, #2 SWW, #2 Y Corn, #1 Soybeans
Note: HRW = Hard red winter wheat, HRS = Hard red spring wheat, SRW = Soft red winter wheat, DUR = Durum, SWW = Soft white winter wheat, Y = Yellow, Ord = Ordinary. Data from tables 2a and 2b derived from map information.
Sources: For U.S. inland data: GeoGrain, and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), *Market News Report*. For corn & soybean export bids: USDA, AMS, *Export Grain Bids Report*. For wheat bids: U.S. Wheat Associates, *Weekly Wheat Report*.

Table 2a. Market update: U.S. origins to export position price spreads ($/bushel)

Commodity	Origin–destination	9/18/2026	9/11/2026
Corn	IL–Gulf	-1.12	-0.96
Corn	NE–Gulf	-1.26	-1.13
Soybean	IA–Gulf	-1.38	-1.50
HRW	KS–Gulf	-2.30	-2.30
HRS	ND–Portland	-2.49	-2.54

Note: nq = no quote; n/a = not available; HRW = hard red winter wheat; HRS = hard red spring wheat.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 2b. Futures

Location	Grain	Month	09/18/2026	Week ago 09/11/2026	Year ago 09/19/2025
Kansas City	Wht	Dec	7.836	7.984	5.070
Minneapolis	Wht	Dec	7.413	7.450	5.675
Chicago	Wht	Dec	7.142	7.254	5.224
Chicago	Corn	Dec	5.276	5.302	4.238
Chicago	Sybn	Dec	13.034	12.964	10.254

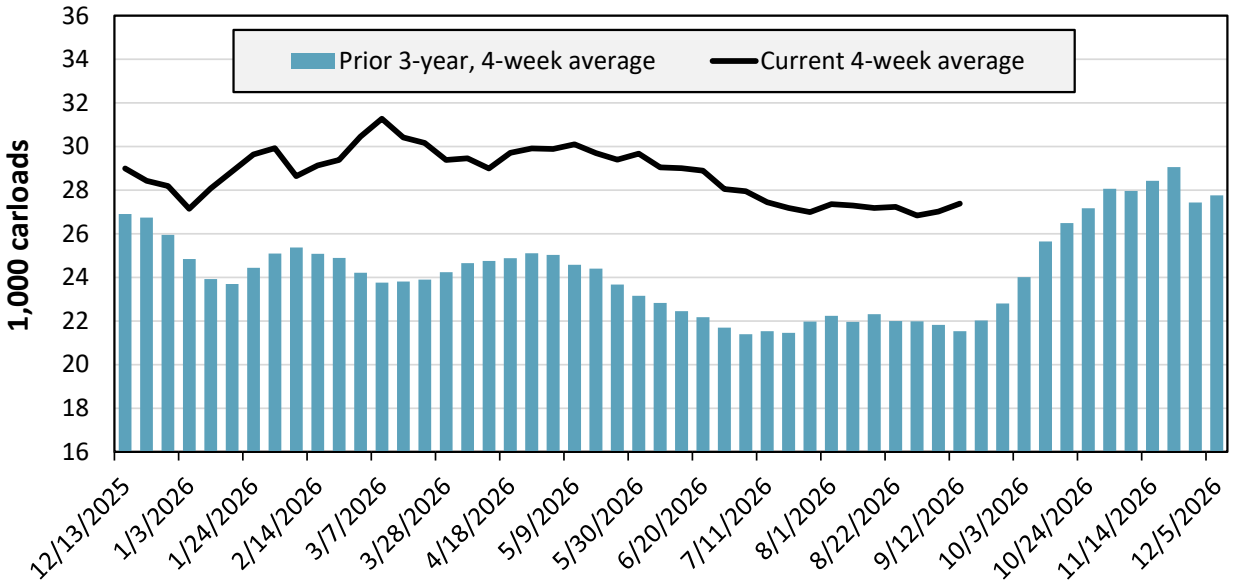
Sources: Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Group Grain and *Oilseed Futures Report*.

Table 3. Class I rail carrier grain car bulletin (grain carloads originated)

For the week ending: 9/12/2026	East		West		Central U.S.		U.S. total
	CSX	NS	BNSF	UP	CPKC	CN	
This week	1,675	2,192	12,933	6,707	3,195	1,299	28,001
This week last year	1,214	1,605	11,652	5,568	3,317	865	24,221
2026 YTD	53,793	92,759	461,790	240,645	128,948	60,886	1,038,821
2025 YTD	56,124	100,055	406,147	211,966	102,629	51,260	928,181
2026 YTD as % of 2025 YTD	96	93	114	114	126	119	112
Last 4 weeks as % of 2025	119	119	116	109	118	119	115
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr. avg.	106	114	130	124	136	146	127
Total 2025	81,717	140,116	608,958	313,968	157,757	79,502	1,382,018

Note: The last 4-week percentages compare the most recent 4 weeks of data to the analogous 4 weeks from the prior year and to the analogous 4 weeks in the prior 3 years. CSX = CSX Transportation; NS = Norfolk Southern; BNSF = BNSF; Railway UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City; YTD = year-to-date; avg. = average; yr. = year. CPKC and CN report carloads for their U.S.-operations only, so the U.S. total reflects originated carloads for all six Class I railroads.
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Figure 3. Total weekly U.S. Class I railroad grain carloads



For the 4 weeks ending September 12, grain carloads were up 1 percent from the previous week, up 15 percent from last year, and up 27 percent from the 3-year average.

Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Table 4a. Rail service metrics—grain unit train origin dwell times and train speeds

For the week ending: 9/11/2026		East		West		Central U.S.		U.S. Average
		CSX	NS	BNSF	UP	CN	CPKC	
Average grain unit train origin dwell times (hours)	This week	47.0	21.7	19.6	20.9	7.7	23.7	23.4
	Average over last 4 weeks	40.3	29.5	25.8	23.8	10.5	25.1	25.8
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	18.6	24.7	10.4	15.1	8.2	40.7	19.6
Average grain unit train speeds (miles per hour)	This week	22.1	18.1	24.4	22.2	24.7	18.6	21.7
	Average over last 4 weeks	21.9	18.1	23.9	22.3	23.3	18.3	21.3
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	23.4	19.9	25.1	23.3	23.9	13.9	21.6

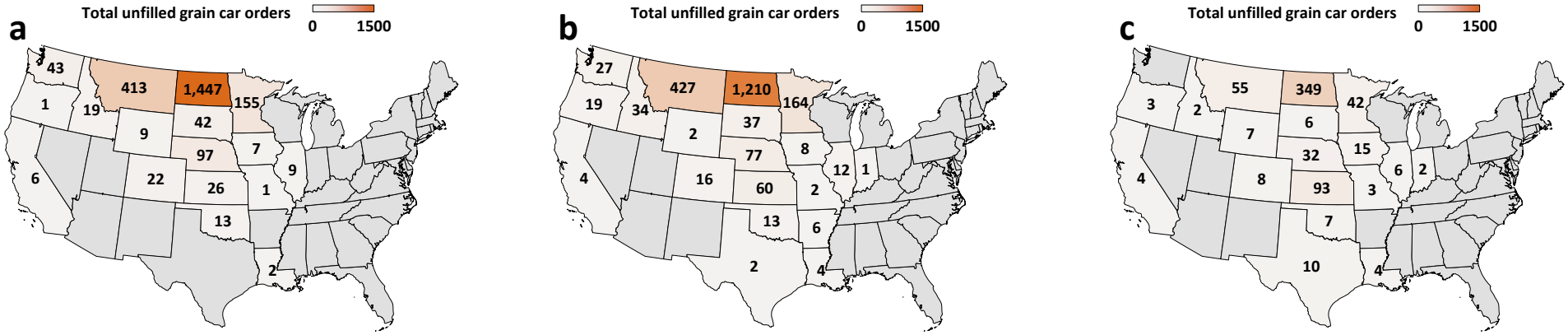
Note: NS = Norfolk Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City.
These service metrics are published weekly on the Surface Transportation Board's website and on AgTransport. For more information on each service metric, see 49 CFR § 1250.2.
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Table 4b. Rail service metrics—unfilled grain car orders and delays

For the week ending: 9/11/2026		East		West		Central U.S.		U.S. Total
		CSX	NS	BNSF	UP	CN	CPKC	
Average number of empty grain cars not moved in over 48 hours	This week	38	23	474	63	7	149	754
	Average over last 4 weeks	49	24	369	52	8	159	659
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	12	5	262	67	8	320	673
Average number of loaded grain cars not moved in over 48 hours	This week	33	391	514	50	4	264	1,255
	Average over last 4 weeks	55	341	688	61	8	216	1,369
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	21	184	253	69	6	504	1,036
Average number of grain unit trains held	This week	0	0	4	5	0	5	14
	Average over last 4 weeks	0	0	4	5	0	6	15
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	0	0	2	3	0	10	14
Total unfilled manifest grain car orders	This week	0	0	843	81	0	1,388	2,312
	Average over last 4 weeks	3	0	1,045	117	0	960	2,125
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	5	3	165	149	0	442	762

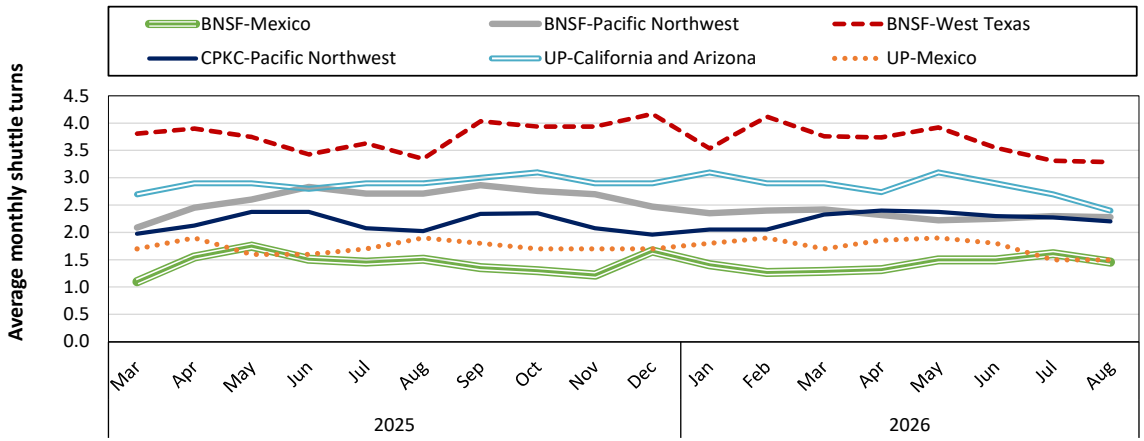
Note: NS = Norfolk Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City.
These service metrics are published weekly on the Surface Transportation Board's website and on AgTransport. For more information on each service metric, see 49 CFR § 1250.2.
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Figure 4. Unfilled manifest grain car orders by State for the week ending 9/11/2026 (a); average over last 4 weeks (b); and average over same 4 weeks last year (c)



Note: Unfilled grain car orders for Kansas City Southern Railway (now part of Canadian Pacific Kansas City) are not included because those metrics are not reported at the State level.
Source: Surface Transportation Board. Map credits: Bing, GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom.

Figure 5. Average monthly turns for grain shuttle trains, by railroad and region

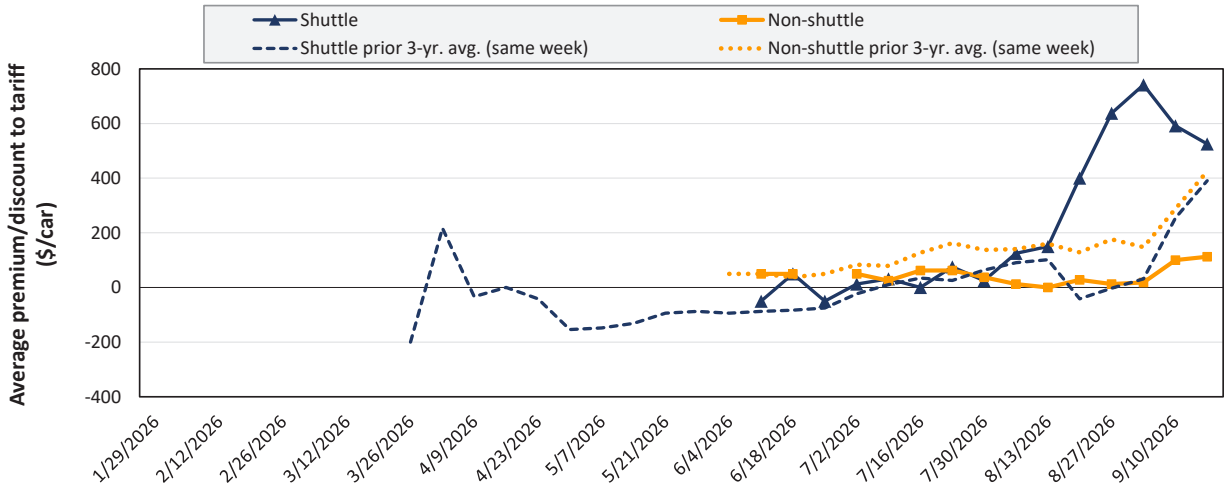


In August 2026, BNSF Railway's average monthly grain shuttle turns were 1.5 to Mexico, 2.3 to the Pacific Northwest, and 3.3 to West Texas. CPKC's shuttle turns averaged 2.2 to the Pacific Northwest. Union Pacific Railroad's shuttle turns averaged 2.4 to California and Arizona, and they averaged 1.5 to Mexico.

Note: A "shuttle turn" refers to the number of trips completed per month by a single train. Additional data (including additional regions and planned turns) are available on AgTransport. BNSF = BNSF Railway; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Railroads periodically auction guaranteed grain car service for an individual trip or a period of time (e.g., 1 year). This ordering system is referred to as the "primary market." Once grain shippers acquire guaranteed freight on the primary market, they can trade that freight with other shippers through a broker. These transactions are referred to as the "secondary market." Secondary rail values are indicators of rail service quality and demand/supply. The values published herein are market indicators only and do not represent guaranteed prices.

Figure 6. Secondary market bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in September 2026



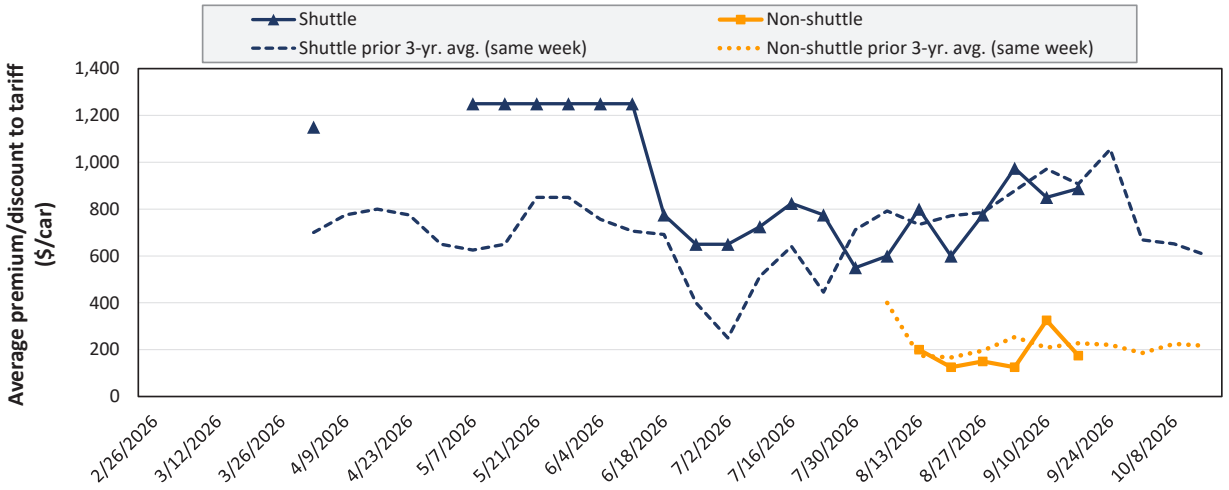
Average non-shuttle bids/offers rose $13 this week, and are at the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers fell $67 this week and are $217 below the peak.

9/17/2026	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$113	n/a
Shuttle	$500	$550

Note: Shuttle bids/offers are for shuttle trains—110+ grain cars that travel from a single origin to a single destination. Non-shuttle bids/offers are for cars in manifest service.
n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of data from the Malsam Company.

Figure 7. Secondary market bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in October 2026



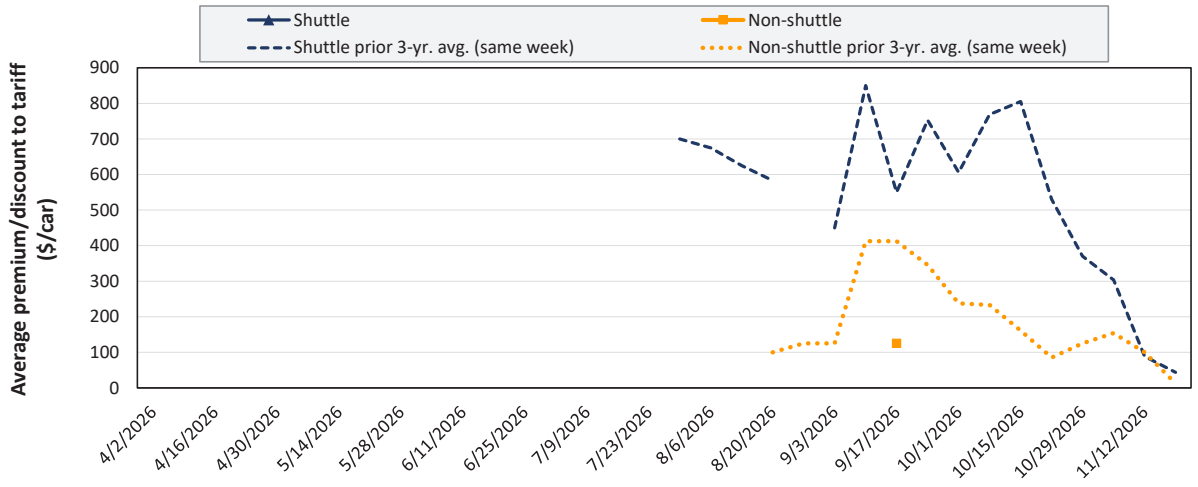
Average non-shuttle bids/offers fell $150 this week, and are $150 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers rose $38 this week and are $363 below the peak.

9/17/2026	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$200	$150
Shuttle	$1,100	$675

Note: Shuttle bids/offers are for shuttle trains—110+ grain cars that travel from a single origin to a single destination. Non-shuttle bids/offers are for cars in manifest service. n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of data from the Malsam Company.

Figure 8. Secondary market bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in November 2026



There were no non-shuttle bids/offers last week. Average non-shuttle bids/offers this week are at the peak.

There were no shuttle bids/offers this week.

9/17/2026	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$125	n/a
Shuttle	n/a	n/a

Note: Shuttle bids/offers are for shuttle trains—110+ grain cars that travel from a single origin to a single destination. Non-shuttle bids/offers are for cars in manifest service. n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of data from the Malsam Company.

Table 5. Weekly secondary railcar market (dollars per car)

For the week ending: 9/17/2026		Delivery period					
		Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27
Non-shuttle	BNSF	113	200	125	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	13	-300	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	38	100	-25	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP	n/a	150	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	n/a	113	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle	BNSF	500	1,100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	-233	-50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	256	581	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP	550	675	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	100	125	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	200	392	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	CPKC	n/a	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 2025	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Shuttle bids/offers are for shuttle trains—110+ grain cars that travel from a single origin to a single destination. Non-shuttle bids/offers are for cars in manifest service. Bids and offers represent a premium/discount to tariff rates; n/a = not available; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of data from the Malsam Company.

A tariff is a document issued by railroads that shows rules, rates, and charges for common carrier rail service. The tariff rate, together with fuel surcharges and any primary or secondary freight costs, constitutes the full cost of shipping grain by rail.

Table 6. Rail tariff rates for wheat shipments, September 2026

Primary wheat class	Railroad	Origin	Destination	Train type	Tariff (per car)	Fuel surcharge (per car)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per car)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per bushel)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per metric ton)	Percent Y/Y change
Durum	BNSF	Williston, ND	St. Louis, MO	Shuttle	$5,984	$432	$6,416	$1.73	$63.71	7.6
	BNSF	Williston, ND	Superior, WI	Shuttle	$4,466	$216	$4,682	$1.27	$46.49	7.4
	CPKC	Westby, MT	St. Louis, MO	Unit	$6,013	$1,056	$7,069	$1.91	$70.20	12.4
	UP	Yuma, AZ	Houston, TX	Manifest	$6,025	$796	$6,821	$1.84	$67.74	5.1
Hard red spring (HRS)	BNSF	Alton (Hillsboro), ND	Chicago, IL	DET	$5,029	$250	$5,279	$1.43	$52.43	8.1
	BNSF	Alton (Hillsboro), ND	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$6,365	$602	$6,967	$1.88	$69.18	9.2
	BNSF	Alton (Hillsboro), ND	Superior, WI	Shuttle	$3,040	$116	$3,156	$0.85	$31.34	8.9
	BNSF	Alton (Hillsboro), ND	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$5,882	$626	$6,508	$1.76	$64.63	10.3
	BNSF	Bucyrus, ND	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$5,963	$530	$6,493	$1.75	$64.48	8.6
	BNSF	Macon, MT	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$5,562	$440	$6,002	$1.62	$59.60	8.6
	CPKC	Minot, ND	Kalama, WA	Unit	$5,448	$935	$6,383	$1.73	$63.39	11.2
	CPKC	Nekoma, ND	Chicago, IL	Manifest	$5,255	$562	$5,817	$1.57	$57.76	9.8
Hard red winter (HRW)	BNSF	Concordia, KS	Greenwood (Mendota), IL	Shuttle	$3,400	$228	$3,628	$0.98	$36.02	4.5
	BNSF	Enid, OK	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$3,400	$279	$3,679	$0.99	$36.53	0.5
	BNSF	Garden City, KS	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$5,800	$752	$6,552	$1.77	$65.06	9.0
	BNSF	Garden City, KS	San Bernardino, CA	DET	$5,600	$529	$6,129	$1.66	$60.86	4.7
	BNSF	Garden City, KS	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$4,200	$385	$4,585	$1.24	$45.53	6.8
	BNSF	Salina, KS	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$4,000	$398	$4,398	$1.19	$43.67	7.7
	BNSF	Wichita, KS	Birmingham, AL	Shuttle	$3,500	$328	$3,828	$1.03	$38.01	6.5
	BNSF	Wichita, KS	Chicago, IL	DET	$3,700	$223	$3,923	$1.06	$38.96	4.1
	BNSF	Wichita, KS	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$3,900	$356	$4,256	$1.15	$42.27	7.2
	UP	Byers, CO	Houston, TX	Shuttle	$4,525	$675	$5,200	$1.41	$51.63	5.7
	UP	Goodland, KS	Kansas City, MO	Manifest	$5,067	$252	$5,319	$1.44	$52.82	4.0
	UP	Medford, OK	Houston, TX	Shuttle	$3,775	$333	$4,108	$1.11	$40.79	3.5
	UP	Salina, KS	Houston, TX	Shuttle	$4,025	$444	$4,469	$1.21	$44.38	4.3
HRS/HRW	BNSF	Bowdle, SD	Chicago, IL	DET	$4,964	$270	$5,234	$1.41	$51.98	7.3
	BNSF	Conrad, MT	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$4,589	$341	$4,930	$1.33	$48.96	9.0
Soft white	BNSF	Templin (Ritzville), WA	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$2,082	$168	$2,250	$0.61	$22.34	8.8
All classes (To East Coast flour mills)	CSX	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	Manifest	$8,611	$251	$8,862	$2.40	$88.01	6.2
	CSX	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	Unit	$7,676	$251	$7,927	$2.14	$78.72	6.9
	CSX	Chicago, IL	Buffalo, NY	Manifest	$6,102	$161	$6,263	$1.69	$62.19	5.7
	CSX	Chicago, IL	Indiantown, FL	Manifest	$8,832	$429	$9,261	$2.50	$91.96	8.1

Note: Chicago, IL, serves as an interchange point between eastern and western Class I railroads. In the table above, all routes with Chicago as either an origin or destination are subject to "Rule 11"—meaning their rate must be combined with a tariff rate from another railroad. (For example, rates for Wichita, KS, to Albany, NY, would combine Wichita to Chicago and Chicago to Albany.) All rates (except Goodland, KS, to Kansas City, MO) are for railroad-owned, large covered hoppers (C-114), which each carry 111 short tons (100.7 metric tons). The Goodland-to-Kansas City route is for small covered hoppers (C-113), which each carry 100 short tons (90.7 metric tons). A bushel of wheat weighs 60 pounds. Percentage change year to year (Y/Y) is calculated using the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge. DET = Domestic Efficiency Trains. DET trains—on BNSF Railway (BNSF) only—are composed of 110 cars loaded at a single origin and split en route to multiple destinations. For mileage calculations, BNSF uses "Seattle, WA" for all Pacific Northwest (PNW) locations and "Houston, TX" for all Texas Gulf locations. CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City. CSX = CSX Transportation. UP = Union Pacific Railroad. A larger dataset (with additional routes, calculations, and shipment characteristics) is available on AgTransport.

Source: BNSF Railway, CPKC, CSX Transportation, and Union Pacific Railroad.

Table 7. Rail tariff rates for corn and soybean unit/shuttle train shipments, September 2026

Commodity	Railroad	Origin	Destination	Car Ownership	Tariff (per car)	Fuel surcharge (per car)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per car)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per bushel)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per metric ton)	Percent Y/Y change
Corn	BNSF	Clarkfield, MN	Hereford, TX	Railroad	$5,600	$390	$5,990	$1.51	$59.48	1.2
	BNSF	Clarkfield, MN	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$5,470	$670	$6,140	$1.55	$60.97	8.6
	BNSF	Edison, NE	Hanford, CA	Railroad	$5,460	$645	$6,105	$1.54	$60.63	-1.5
	BNSF	Edison, NE	Hereford, TX	Railroad	$4,500	$275	$4,775	$1.20	$47.42	-6.7
	BNSF	Edison, NE	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$5,350	$740	$6,090	$1.54	$60.48	9.9
	BNSF	Greenwood (Mendota), IL	Hereford, TX	Railroad	$4,620	$329	$4,949	$1.25	$49.15	6.1
	BNSF	Phelps (Rock Port), MO	Clovis, NM	Railroad	$4,260	$269	$4,529	$1.14	$44.97	-7.3
	BNSF	Phelps (Rock Port), MO	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Railroad	$4,000	$414	$4,414	$1.11	$43.83	-4.9
	BNSF	Selby, SD	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$5,430	$583	$6,013	$1.52	$59.71	7.6
	BNSF	St. Cloud, MN	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$5,430	$660	$6,090	$1.54	$60.48	8.5
	CN	Gibson City, IL	Reserve, LA	Private	$2,411	$605	$3,016	$0.76	$29.95	19.2
	CN	Gibson City, IL	Reserve, LA	Railroad	$2,791	$605	$3,396	$0.86	$33.72	16.7
	CPKC	Delhi, LA	Morton, MS	Railroad	$1,342	$84	$1,426	$0.36	$14.17	2.5
	CPKC	Enderlin, ND	Kalama, WA	Railroad	$5,047	$1,075	$6,122	$1.54	$60.80	10.2
	CPKC	Glenwood, MN	Boardman, OR	Railroad	$5,513	$1,035	$6,548	$1.65	$65.02	9.1
	CSX	Haw Creek (Ladoga), IN	Ozark, AL	Railroad	$6,241	$219	$6,460	$1.63	$64.16	8.4
	CSX	Marysville, OH	Rose Hill, NC	Railroad	$6,378	$242	$6,620	$1.67	$65.74	7.8
	CSX	Olney, IL	Fairmount, GA	Railroad	$4,891	$155	$5,046	$1.27	$50.11	7.2
	UP	Allen Station (San Jose), IL	Pittsburg, TX	Railroad	$3,935	$401	$4,336	$1.09	$43.06	0.4
	UP	Frankfort, KS	Calipatria, CA	Railroad	$5,855	$912	$6,767	$1.71	$67.20	3.5
	UP	Mead, NE	Keyes, CA	Railroad	$6,015	$1,007	$7,022	$1.77	$69.74	4.0
	UP	Nebraska City, NE	Amarillo, TX	Railroad	$4,855	$414	$5,269	$1.33	$52.32	0.4
	UP	Sloan, IA	Burley, ID	Railroad	$5,535	$682	$6,217	$1.57	$61.74	2.2
	UP	Sterling, IL	Nashville, AR	Railroad	$4,075	$419	$4,494	$1.13	$44.63	0.5
Soybeans	BNSF	Argyle, MN	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$6,255	$611	$6,866	$1.86	$68.18	8.9
	BNSF	Argyle, MN	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Railroad	$5,185	$582	$5,767	$1.56	$57.27	7.5
	BNSF	Casselton, ND	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$6,205	$592	$6,797	$1.84	$67.50	8.8
	BNSF	Casselton, ND	St. Louis, MO	Railroad	$3,400	$311	$3,711	$1.00	$36.85	6.2
	BNSF	Mitchell, SD	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$6,305	$655	$6,960	$1.88	$69.11	9.4
	CN	Gibson City, IL	Reserve, LA	Private	$2,411	$605	$3,016	$0.82	$29.95	19.2
	CN	Gibson City, IL	Reserve, LA	Railroad	$2,791	$605	$3,396	$0.92	$33.72	16.7
	CPKC	Enderlin, ND	Kalama, WA	Railroad	$5,785	$1,075	$6,860	$1.85	$68.13	9.0
	CPKC	Enderlin, ND	East St. Louis, IL	Railroad	$3,526	$813	$4,339	$1.17	$43.08	10.8
	CSX	Casey, IL	Mobile, AL	Private	$3,646	$241	$3,887	$1.05	$38.60	6.6
	CSX	Marion, OH	Chesapeake, VA	Private	$3,214	$236	$3,450	$0.93	$34.26	7.3
	UP	Canton, KS	Houston, TX	Railroad	$3,875	$433	$4,308	$1.16	$42.78	10.4
	UP	Cozad, NE	Kalama, WA	Railroad	$5,365	$906	$6,271	$1.69	$62.27	10.6
	UP	Cozad, NE	Houston, TX	Railroad	$4,235	$625	$4,860	$1.31	$48.26	11.1
	UP	Sloan, IA	Ama, LA	Railroad	$4,315	$714	$5,029	$1.36	$49.94	11.5

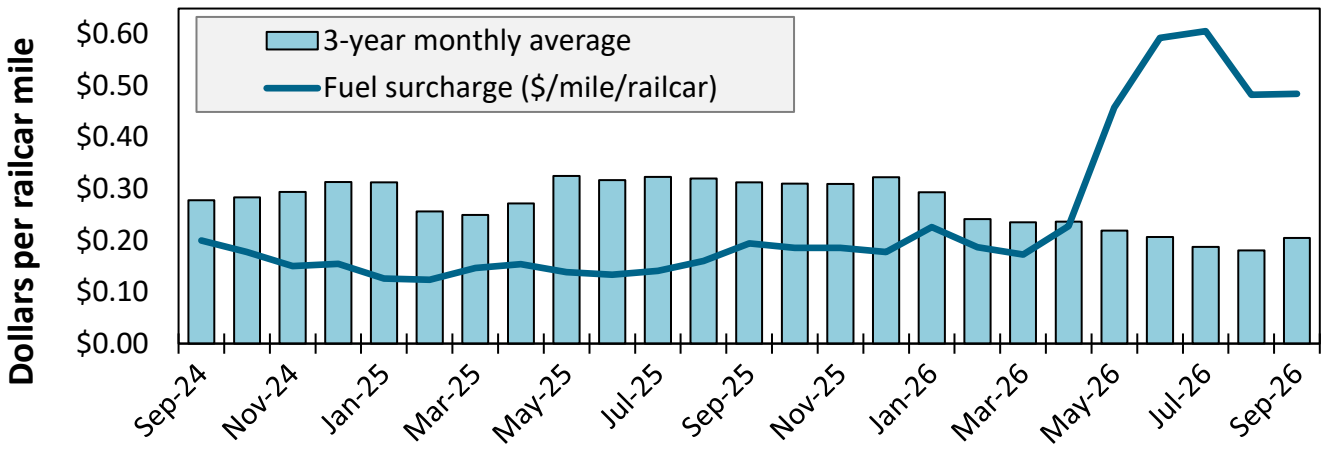
Note: Shuttle/unit trains are composed of 90+ grain cars that travel from a single origin to a single destination. All rates are for large covered hoppers (C-114), which each carry 111 short tons (100.7 metric tons). A bushel of corn weighs 56 pounds, and a bushel of soybeans weighs 60 pounds. Percentage change year to year (Y/Y) is calculated using the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge. For mileage calculations, BNSF Railway (BNSF) uses "Seattle, WA" for all Pacific Northwest (PNW) locations and "Houston, TX" for all Texas Gulf locations. CN = Canadian National Railway. CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City. CSX = CSX Transportation. UP = Union Pacific Railroad. n/a = not available. A larger dataset (with additional routes, calculations, and shipment characteristics) is available on AgTransport.
Source: BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway, CPKC, CSX Transportation, and Union Pacific Railroad.

Table 8. Rail tariff rates for U.S. bulk grain shipments to Mexico, September 2026

Commodity	Railroad	Origin	Destination	Train type	Tariff (per car)	Fuel surcharge (per car)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per car)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per bushel)	Tariff + fuel surcharge (per metric ton)	Percent Y/Y change
Corn	BNSF	Adair, IL	El Paso, TX	Shuttle	$4,641	$449	$5,090	$1.27	$50.10	8.3
	BNSF	Superior, NE	El Paso, TX	Shuttle	$4,622	$353	$4,975	$1.24	$48.96	-2.7
	CPKC	Atchison, KS	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,080	$912	$5,992	$1.50	$58.97	6.9
	CPKC	Council Bluffs, IA	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,550	$1,010	$6,560	$1.64	$64.56	7.0
	CPKC	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,005	$871	$5,876	$1.47	$57.83	6.7
	CPKC	Marshall, MO	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,190	$924	$6,114	$1.53	$60.17	6.8
	UP	Pontiac, IL	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$4,535	$741	$5,276	$1.32	$51.93	3.1
	UP	Sterling, IL	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$4,655	$769	$5,424	$1.36	$53.38	3.2
Soybeans	BNSF	Brunswick, MO	El Paso, TX	Shuttle	$3,585	$381	$3,966	$1.06	$39.03	-10.8
	BNSF	Hardin, MO	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$3,585	$379	$3,964	$1.06	$39.01	-10.8
	CPKC	Atchison, KS	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,080	$912	$5,992	$1.60	$58.97	6.9
	CPKC	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,005	$871	$5,876	$1.57	$57.83	6.7
	UP	Grand Island, NE	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$5,175	$705	$5,880	$1.57	$57.87	9.6
	UP	Roelyn, IA	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$5,260	$738	$5,998	$1.61	$59.03	9.7
Wheat	BNSF	FT Worth, TX	El Paso, TX	DET	$3,100	$275	$3,375	$0.90	$33.22	9.4
	BNSF	FT Worth, TX	El Paso, TX	Shuttle	$2,600	$275	$2,875	$0.77	$28.30	-0.4
	CPKC	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,005	$871	$5,876	$1.57	$57.83	6.7
	UP	Great Bend, KS	Laredo, TX	Shuttle	$4,325	$529	$4,854	$1.30	$47.77	4.7
	UP	Wichita, KS	Laredo, TX	Shuttle	$4,065	$466	$4,531	$1.21	$44.59	4.4

Note: After December 2021, U.S. railroads stopped reporting "through rates" from the U.S. origin to the Mexican destination. Thus, the table shows “Rule 11 rates,” which cover only the portion of the shipment from a U.S. origin to locations on the U.S.-Mexico border. The Rule 11 rates apply only to shipments that continue into Mexico, and the total cost of the shipment would include a separate rate obtained from a Mexican railroad. The rates apply to jumbo covered hopper ("C114") cars. The "shuttle" train type applies to qualified shipments (typically, 110 cars) that meet railroad efficiency requirements. The "non-shuttle" train type applies to Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway (CPKC) shipments and is made up of 75 cars or more (except the Marshall, MO, rate is for a 50-74 car train). BNSF Railway's domestic efficiency trains (DET) are shuttle-length trains (typically 110 cars) that can be split en route for unloading at multiple destinations. Percentage change month to month (M/M) and year to year (Y/Y) are calculated using the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge. For a larger list of to-the-border rates, see AgTransport.
Source: BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, and CPKC (formerly, Kansas City Southern Railway).

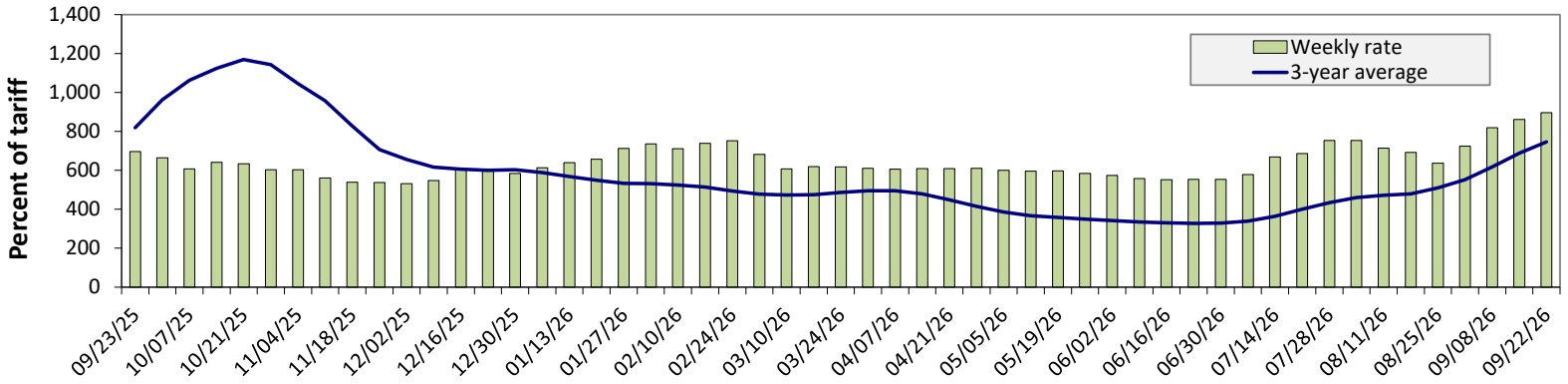
Figure 9. Railroad fuel surcharges, North American weighted average



September 2026: $0.48/mile, unchanged from last month’s surcharge of $0.48/mile; up 29 cents from the September 2025 surcharge of $0.19/mile; and up 28 cents from the September prior 3-year average of $0.2/mile.

Note: Weighted by each Class I railroad's proportion of grain traffic for the prior year.
Source: BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway, CSX Transportation, Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, Norfolk Southern Corporation.

Figure 10. Illinois River barge freight rate



For the week ending September 22: 4 percent higher than the previous week; 29 percent higher than last year; and 20 percent higher than the 3-year average.

Note: Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); 3-year avg. = 4-week moving average of the 3-year average.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 9. Weekly barge freight rates: southbound only

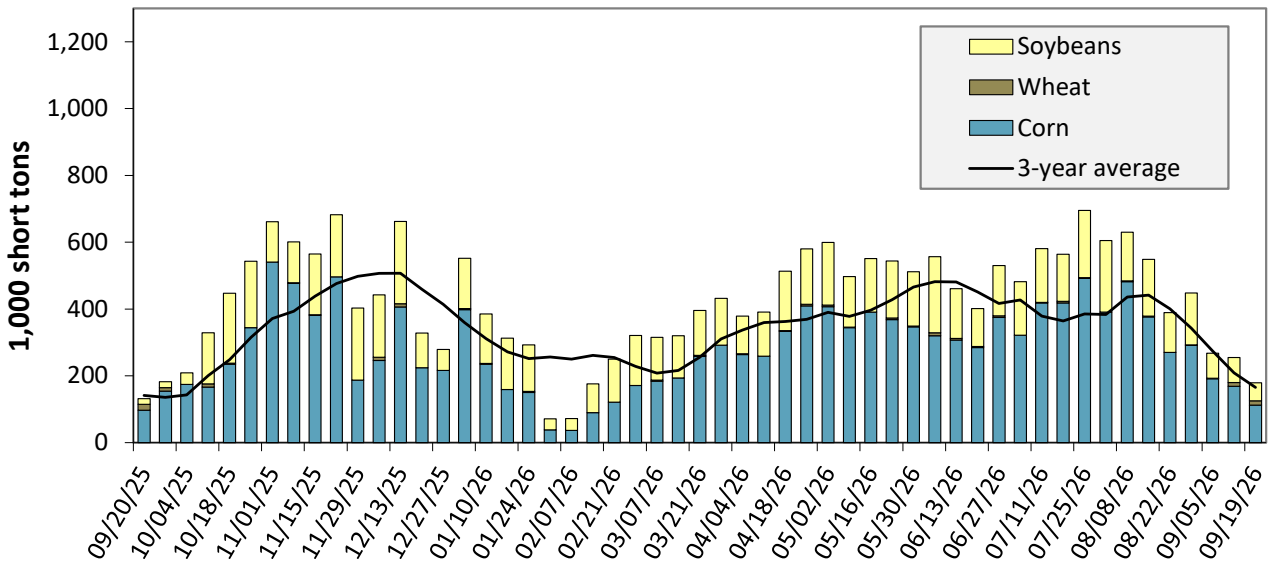
Measure	Date	Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Illinois River	St. Louis	Ohio River	Cairo-Memphis
Rate	9/22/2026	904	964	897	835	988	888
	9/15/2026	878	919	861	818	869	847
$/ton	9/22/2026	55.96	51.28	41.62	33.32	46.34	27.88
	9/15/2026	54.35	48.89	39.95	32.64	40.76	26.60
Measure	**Time Period**	**Twin Cities**	**Mid-Mississippi**	**Illinois River**	**St. Louis**	**Ohio River**	**Cairo-Memphis**
Current week % change from the same week	Last year	27	37	29	35	45	43
	3-year avg.	23	30	20	11	29	10
Rate	October	971	961	928	839	928	778
	December	n/a	n/a	694	593	678	539

Note: Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); 3-year avg. = 4-week moving average of the 3-year avg.; ton = 2,000 pounds; "n/a" = data not available. The per ton rate for Twin Cities assumes a base rate of $6.19 (Minneapolis, MN, to LaCrosse, WI). The per ton rate at Mid-Mississippi assumes a base rate of $5.32 (Savanna, IL, to Keithsburg, IL). The per ton rate on the Illinois River assumes a base rate of $4.64 (Havana, IL, to Hardin, IL). The per ton rate at St. Louis assumes a base rate of $3.99 (Grafton, IL, to Cape Girardeau, MO). The per ton rate on the Ohio River assumes a base rate of $4.69 (Silver Grove, KY, to Madison, IN). The per ton rate at Memphis-Cairo assumes a base rate of $3.14 (West Memphis, AR, to Memphis, TN). For more on base rate values along the various segments of the Mississippi River System, see AgTransport.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 11. Benchmark tariff rates

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 12. Barge movements on the Mississippi River (Locks 27-Granite City, IL)



For the week ending September 19: 36 percent higher than last year and 8 percent higher than the 3-year average.

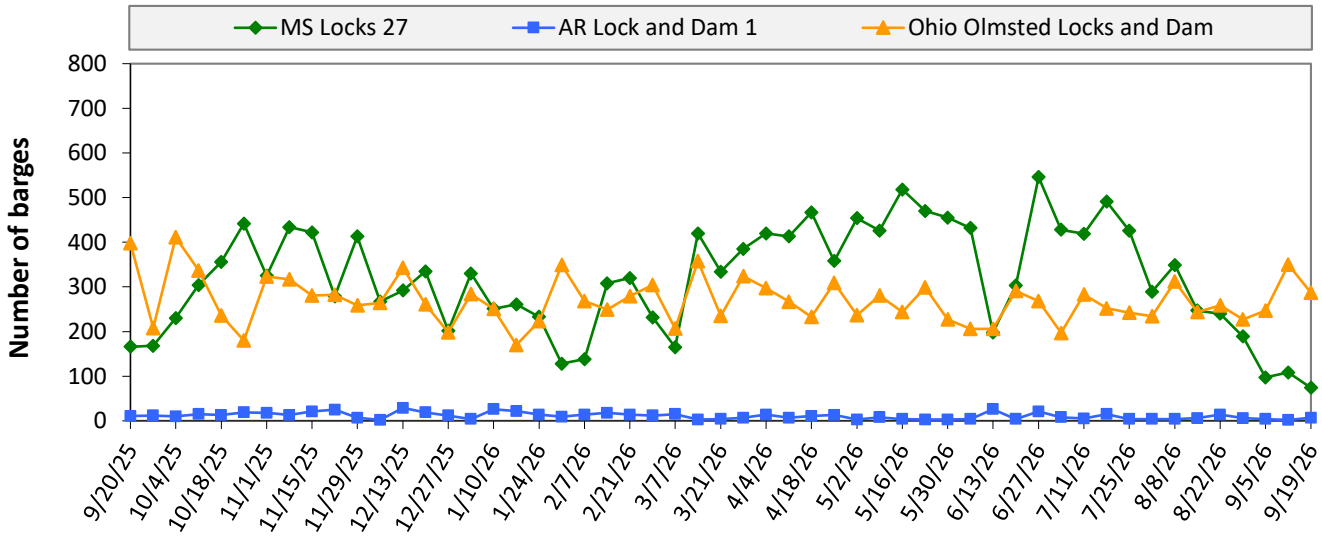
Note: The 3-year average is a 4-week moving average.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Table 10. Barged grain movements (1,000 tons)

For the week ending 09/19/2026	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River (Rock Island, IL (L15))	34	0	10	0	44
Mississippi River (Winfield, MO (L25))	82	18	29	0	128
Mississippi River (Alton, IL (L26))	129	13	49	0	191
Mississippi River (Granite City, IL (L27))	112	13	54	0	178
Illinois River (La Grange)	49	0	16	0	65
Ohio River (Olmsted)	90	2	84	2	178
Arkansas River (L1)	4	3	14	0	21
Weekly total - 2026	206	17	152	2	377
Weekly total - 2025	161	35	54	10	261
2026 YTD	12,926	706	7,382	76	21,089
2025 YTD	14,345	1,051	7,730	144	23,269
2026 as % of 2025 YTD	90	67	95	53	91
Last 4 weeks as % of 2025	140	42	170	88	136
Total 2025	20,015	1,259	11,322	166	32,761

Note: “Other” refers to oats, barley, sorghum, and rye. Total may not add up due to rounding. YTD = year to date. Weekly total, YTD, and calendar year total include Mississippi River lock 27, Ohio River Olmsted lock, and Arkansas Lock 1. “L” (as in "L15") refers to a lock, locks, or lock and dam facility.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

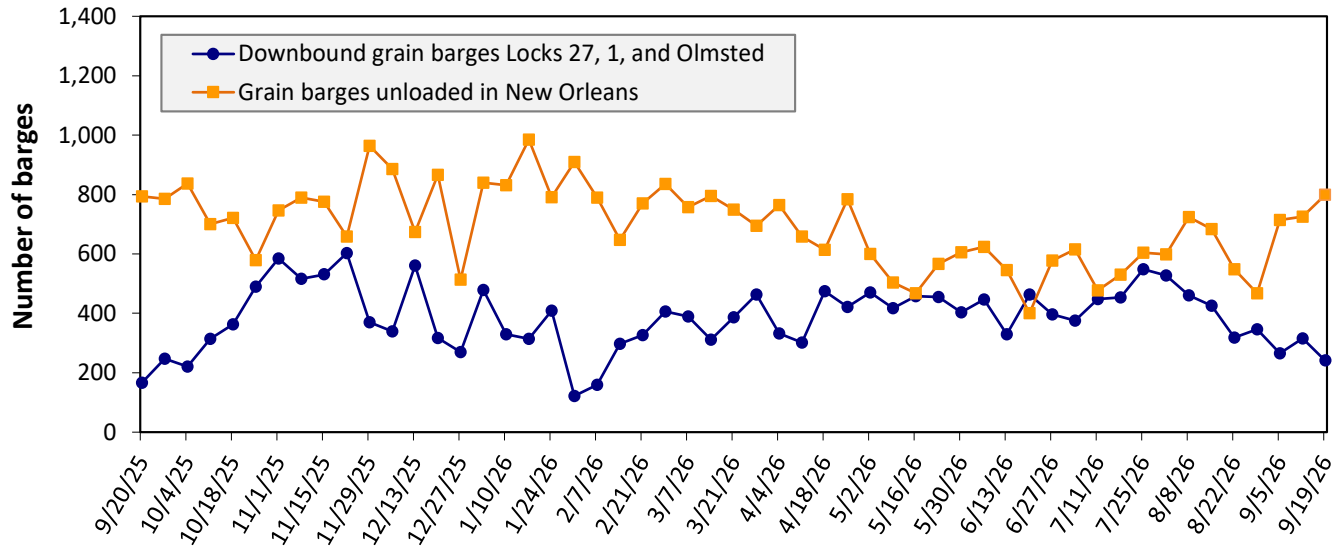
Figure 13. Upbound empty barges transiting Mississippi River Locks 27, Arkansas River Lock and Dam 1, and Ohio River Olmsted Locks and Dam



For the week ending September 19: 368 barges transited the locks, 92 barges fewer than the previous week, and 15 percent higher than the 3-year average.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Figure 14. Grain barges for export in New Orleans region



For the week ending September 19: 241 barges moved down river, 74 fewer than the previous week; 799 grain barges unloaded in the New Orleans Region, 10 percent more than the previous week.

Note: Olmsted = Olmsted Locks and Dam.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 11. Monthly barge freight rates, Columbia-Snake River

River	Origin	$/ton			Current month % change from the same month	
		October 2026	September 2026	October 2025	Last year	3-year avg.
Snake River	Lewiston, ID/Clarkston, WA/Wilma, WA	$25.23	$24.73	$22.88	10.3	12.7
	Central Ferry, WA/Almota, WA	$24.27	$23.77	$21.95	10.6	12.9
	Lyons Ferry, WA	$23.18	$22.68	$20.90	10.9	13.2
	Windust, WA/Lower Monumental, WA	$22.07	$21.57	$19.83	11.3	13.4
	Sheffler, WA	$22.04	$21.54	$19.80	11.3	13.5
Columbia River	Burbank, WA/Kennewick, WA/Pasco, WA	$20.76	$20.26	$18.56	11.8	13.9
	Port Kelly, WA/Wallula, WA	$20.52	$20.02	$18.33	11.9	13.9
	Umatilla, OR	$20.42	$19.92	$18.23	12.0	14.0
	Boardman, OR/Hogue Warner, OR	$20.14	$19.64	$17.96	12.1	14.1
	Arlington, OR/Roosevelt, WA	$19.97	$19.47	$17.80	12.2	14.2
	Biggs, OR	$18.54	$18.04	$16.42	12.9	14.7
	The Dalles, OR	$17.36	$16.86	$15.28	13.6	15.3

Note: Destination is Portland, OR, or Vancouver, WA; ton = 2,000 pounds; n/a = data not available.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 12. Monthly barged grain movements, Columbia-Snake (1,000 tons)

August, 2026	Wheat	Other	Total
Snake River (McNary Lock and Dam (L24))	389	0	389
Columbia River (Bonneville Lock and Dam (L1))	450	0	450
Monthly total 2025 (L1)	421	0	421
Monthly total 2025(L24)	353	0	353
2026 YTD(L1)	2,334	0	2,334
2026 YTD(L24)	1,897	0	1,897
2025 YTD(L1)	2,629	0	2,629
2025 YTD(L24)	2,297	0	2,297

Note: "Other" refers to corn, soybeans, oats, barley, and rye. Totals may not add up because of rounding. "Monthly total" refers to grain moving through Lock 1, headed for export.
YTD = year to date. "L" (as in "L1") refers to lock, locks, or lock and dam facility.
n/a = data not available.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Figure 15. Dam and port locations on Columbia-Snake River

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

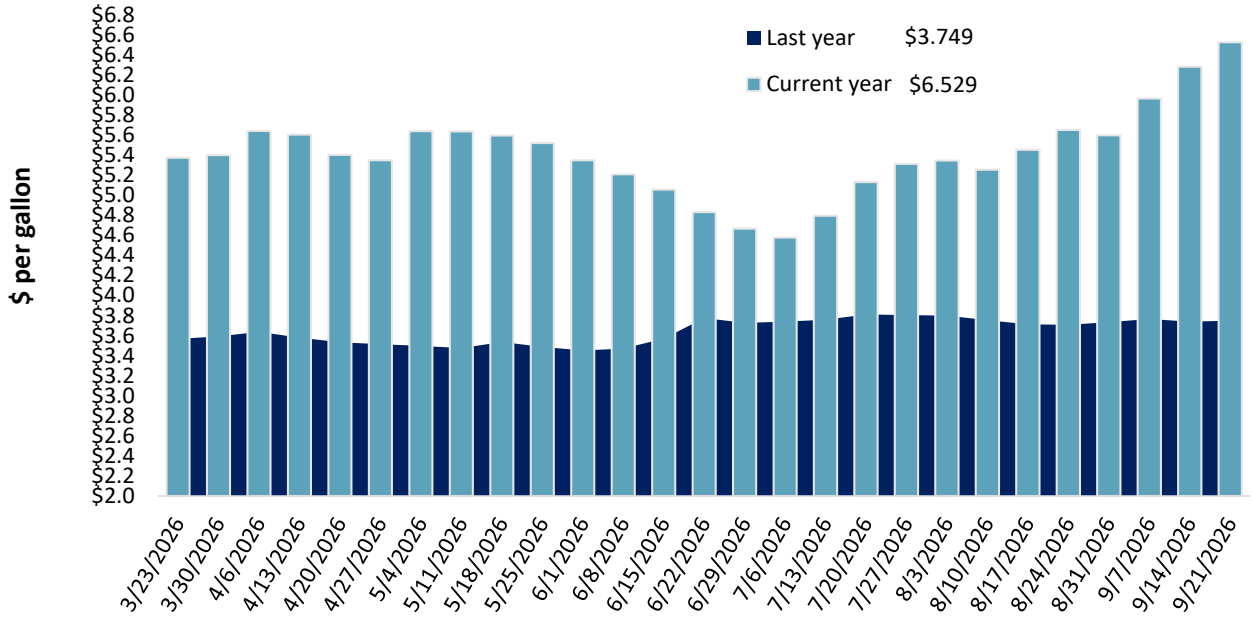
The weekly diesel price provides a proxy for trends in U.S. truck rates as diesel fuel is a significant expense for truck grain movements.

Table 13. Retail on-highway diesel prices, week ending 9/21/2026 (U.S. $/gallon)

Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	6.268	0.110	2.523
	New England	6.517	0.315	2.555
	Central Atlantic	6.546	0.234	2.638
	Lower Atlantic	6.139	0.043	2.475
II	Midwest	6.680	0.430	2.949
III	Gulf Coast	6.177	0.150	2.777
IV	Rocky Mountain	6.340	0.274	2.593
V	West Coast	7.456	0.206	2.932
	West Coast less California	6.791	0.225	2.668
	California	8.246	0.207	3.261
Total	United States	6.529	0.244	2.780

Note: Diesel fuel prices include all taxes. Prices represent an average of all types of diesel fuel. On June 13, 2022, the Energy Information Administration implemented a new methodology to estimate weekly on-highway diesel fuel prices.
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration.

Figure 16. Weekly diesel fuel prices, U.S. average



For the week ending September 21, the U.S. average diesel fuel price increased 24.4 cents from the previous week to $6.529 per gallon, 278.0 cents above the same week last year.

Note: On June 13, 2022, the Energy Information Administration implemented a new methodology to estimate weekly on-highway diesel fuel prices.
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration.

Table 14. U.S. export balances and cumulative exports (1,000 metric tons)

Grain Exports		Wheat						Corn	Soybeans	Total
		Hard red winter (HRW)	Soft red winter (SRW)	Hard red spring (HRS)	Soft white wheat (SWW)	Durum	All wheat			
Current unshipped (outstanding) export sales	For the week ending 09/17/2026	546	421	945	1,113	56	3,080	13,879	19,635	36,595
	This week year ago	2,066	637	1,249	1,129	41	5,121	22,197	1,244	28,562
	Last 4 wks. as % of same period in prior marketing year	26	73	86	107	155	65	52	157	81
Current shipped (cummulative) export sales	Current MYTD	1,542	1,007	1,765	1,785	189	6,288	4,359	1,567	12,214
	Prior MYTD	3,356	1,297	2,162	1,532	172	8,520	3,559	14,541	26,619
	Current MYTD as % of prior MYTD	46	78	82	116	110	74	122	11	46
	Total 2025/26	8,243	3,202	6,078	5,207	622	23,419	86,014	41,007	150,440
	Total 2024/25	5,377	3,095	6,560	5,730	335	21,097	69,081	50,106	140,284

Note: The marketing year for wheat is June 1 to May 31 and, for corn and soybeans, September 1 to August 31. YTD = year-to-date. wks. = weeks. MYTD = marketing year to date.
Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 15. Top 5 importers of U.S. corn

For the week ending 9/17/2026	Total commitments (1,000 mt)		% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2023-25 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2026/27	YTD MY 2025/26		
Mexico	6,861	8,914	-23	23,186
Japan	2,998	2,965	1	13,485
Colombia	1,627	1,863	-13	7,639
Korea	1,216	1,502	-19	5,826
Spain	290	699	-59	2,730
Top 5 importers	12,702	15,244	-17	50,136
Total U.S. corn export sales	18,238	25,757	-29	69,791
% of YTD current month's export projection	22%	30%	-	-
Change from prior week	838	1,923	-	-
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	70%	59%	-	72%
USDA forecast September 2026	83,189	87,000	-4	-
Corn use for ethanol USDA forecast, September 2026	142,240	140,970	1	-

Note: The top 5 importers are based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for marketing year (MY) 2025/26 (September 1 – August 31). "Total commitments" = cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), from FAS weekly export sales report, or export sales query. Total commitments' change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous week's outstanding sales or accumulated sales. In rightmost column, "Exports" = accumulated exports (as defined in FAS marketing year ranking reports). mt = metric ton; yr. = year; avg. = average; YTD = year to date; "-" = not applicable.
Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 16. Top 5 importers of U.S. soybeans

For the week ending 9/17/2026	Total commitments (1,000 mt)		% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2024-26 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2026/27	YTD MY 2025/26		
China	10,170	0	NA	19,737
Mexico	1,807	2,286	-21	4,939
Egypt	461	672	-31	3,402
Indonesia	430	471	-9	2,205
Japan	518	462	12	2,128
Top 5 importers	13,385	3,890	244	32,410
Total U.S. soybean export sales	21,202	10,933	94	45,208
% of YTD current month's export projection	46%	26%	-	-
Change from prior week	582	724	-	-
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	63%	36%	-	72%
USDA forecast, September 2026	45,858	41,368	11	-

Note: The top 5 importers are based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for marketing year (MY) 2025/26 (September 1 – August 31). "Total commitments" = cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), from FAS weekly export sales report, or export sales query. Total commitments' change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous week's outstanding sales or accumulated sales. In rightmost column, "Exports" = accumulated exports (as defined in FAS marketing year ranking reports). mt = metric ton; yr. = year; avg. = average; YTD = year to date; "-" = not applicable. Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 17. Top 10 importers of all U.S. wheat

For the week ending 9/17/2026	Total commitments (1,000 mt)		% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2023-25 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2026/27	YTD MY 2025/26		
Mexico	2,193	2,273	-4	3,744
Philippines	1,360	1,563	-13	2,677
Japan	1,100	1,011	9	2,050
Korea	874	909	-4	1,888
Taiwan	477	493	-3	1,005
Nigeria	195	925	-79	878
China	NA	0	NA	863
Indonesia	248	740	-66	746
Thailand	319	298	7	690
Vietnam	303	357	-15	581
Top 10 importers	7,069	8,569	-18	15,121
Total U.S. wheat export sales	9,368	13,640	-31	21,015
% of YTD current month's export projection	44%	55%	-	-
Change from prior week	268	540	-	-
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	75%	63%	-	72%
USDA forecast, September 2026	21,092	24,712	-15	-

Note: The top 10 importers are based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for marketing year (MY) 2025/26 (June 1 – May 31). "Total commitments" = cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), from FAS weekly export sales report, or export sales query. Total commitments' change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous week's outstanding sales or accumulated sales. In rightmost column, "Exports" = accumulated exports (as defined in FAS marketing year ranking reports). mt = metric ton; yr. = year; avg. = average; YTD = year to date; "-" = not applicable.
Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

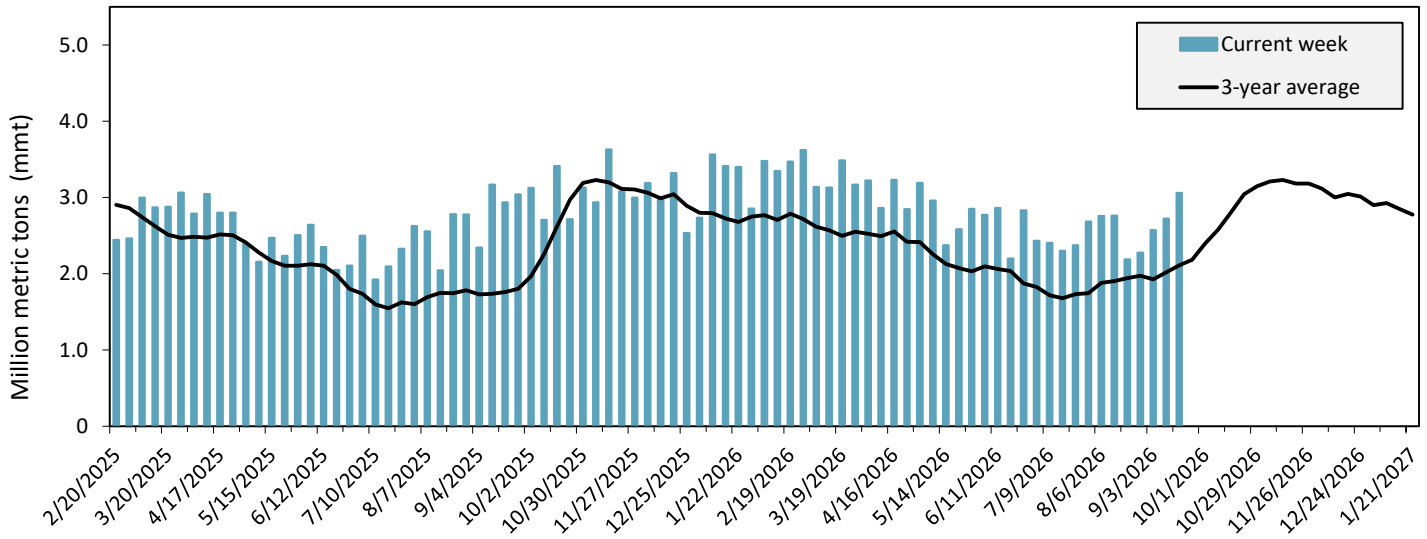
Table 18. Grain inspections for export by U.S. port region (1,000 metric tons)

Port regions	Commodity	For the week ending 09/17/2026	Previous week	Current week as % of previous	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	2026 YTD as % of 2025 YTD	Last 4-weeks as % of:		2025 total
								Last year	Prior 3-yr. avg.	
Pacific Northwest	Corn	706	491	144	19,510	16,522	118	258	660	24,214
	Soybeans	0	0	n/a	4,181	1,966	213	100	0	2,957
	Wheat	191	327	58	7,771	8,672	90	74	85	12,271
	All grain	897	818	110	31,777	27,275	117	141	195	39,721
Mississippi Gulf	Corn	762	675	113	27,691	26,961	103	81	115	37,115
	Soybeans	695	576	121	15,694	14,402	109	99	128	23,350
	Wheat	35	43	81	2,283	3,136	73	25	32	3,980
	All grain	1,492	1,294	115	45,791	44,540	103	82	111	64,484
Texas Gulf	Corn	60	52	115	1,347	474	284	196	384	590
	Soybeans	0	0	n/a	100	106	94	n/a	0	1,431
	Wheat	64	16	400	2,088	3,526	59	16	31	4,690
	All grain	124	68	182	7,113	4,649	153	44	64	7,774
Interior	Corn	409	248	165	11,805	10,576	112	101	127	15,546
	Soybeans	64	96	66	5,114	4,935	104	79	96	7,713
	Wheat	34	74	46	2,305	2,398	96	84	88	3,104
	All grain	532	436	122	19,579	18,278	107	94	114	26,888
Great Lakes	Corn	0	0	n/a	359	147	244	26	77	414
	Soybeans	0	8	0	66	0	n/a	n/a	73	63
	Wheat	10	11	86	262	225	117	123	109	434
	All grain	10	19	50	686	371	185	72	97	911
Atlantic	Corn	1	86	2	1,399	301	465	241	580	607
	Soybeans	1	0	n/a	616	501	123	38	42	1,085
	Wheat	2	1	208	22	54	41	280	93	81
	All grain	4	87	5	2,037	856	238	215	379	1,773
All Regions	Corn	1,939	1,552	125	62,111	54,981	113	114	171	78,486
	Soybeans	759	680	112	26,280	22,013	119	95	117	36,852
	Wheat	335	473	71	14,731	18,011	82	56	70	24,560
	All grain	3,058	2,723	112	107,493	96,073	112	94	126	141,804

Note: Data include revisions from prior weeks; "All grain" includes corn, soybeans, wheat, sorghum, oats, barley, rye, sunflower, flaxseed, and mixed grains; "All regions" includes listed regions and other minor regions not listed; YTD = year-to-date; n/a = not available or no change. A "-" in the table indicates a percentage change with a near-zero denominator for the period.
Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

The United States exports approximately one-quarter of the grain it produces. On average, this includes nearly 46 percent of U.S.-grown wheat, 47 percent of U.S.-grown soybeans, and 15 percent of the U.S.-grown corn. In 2025, approximately 51 percent of the U.S. grain-export shipments departed through the U.S. Gulf region and 28 percent departed through the PNW.

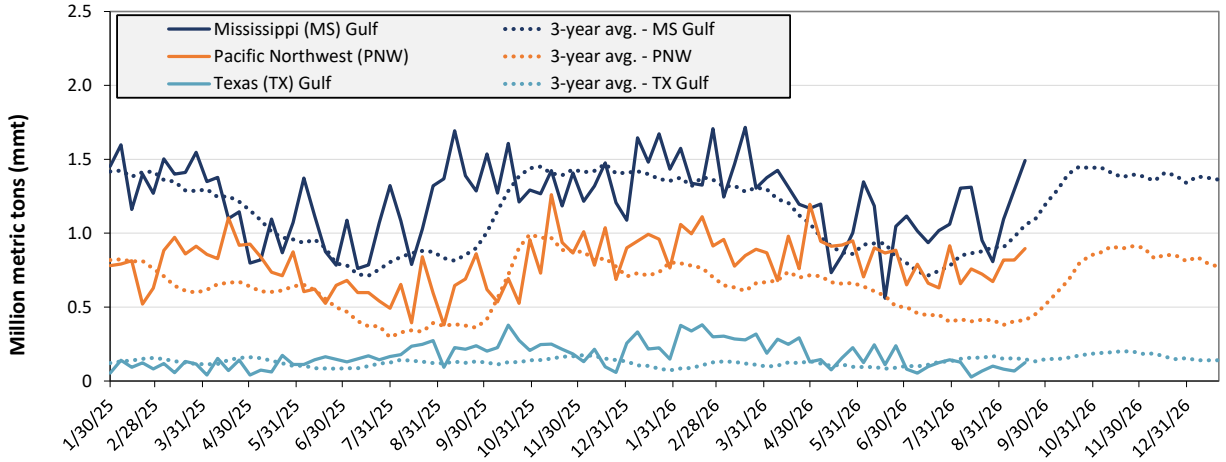
Figure 17. U.S. grain inspected for export (wheat, corn, and soybeans)



For the week ending September 17: 3.1 mmt of grain inspected, up 12 percent from the previous week, down 7 percent from the same week last year, and up 45 percent from the 3-year average.

Note: 3-year average consists of 4-week running average.
Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Figure 18. U.S. grain inspections for U.S. Gulf and PNW (wheat, corn, and soybeans)



Week ending 09/17/26 inspections (mmt):
MS Gulf: 1.49
PNW: 0.9
TX Gulf: 0.12

Percent change from:	MS Gulf	TX Gulf	U.S. Gulf	PNW
Last week	up 15	up 82	up 19	up 10
Last year (same 7 days)	down 4	down 53	down 11	up 16
3-year average (4-week moving average)	up 41	down 15	up 35	up 118

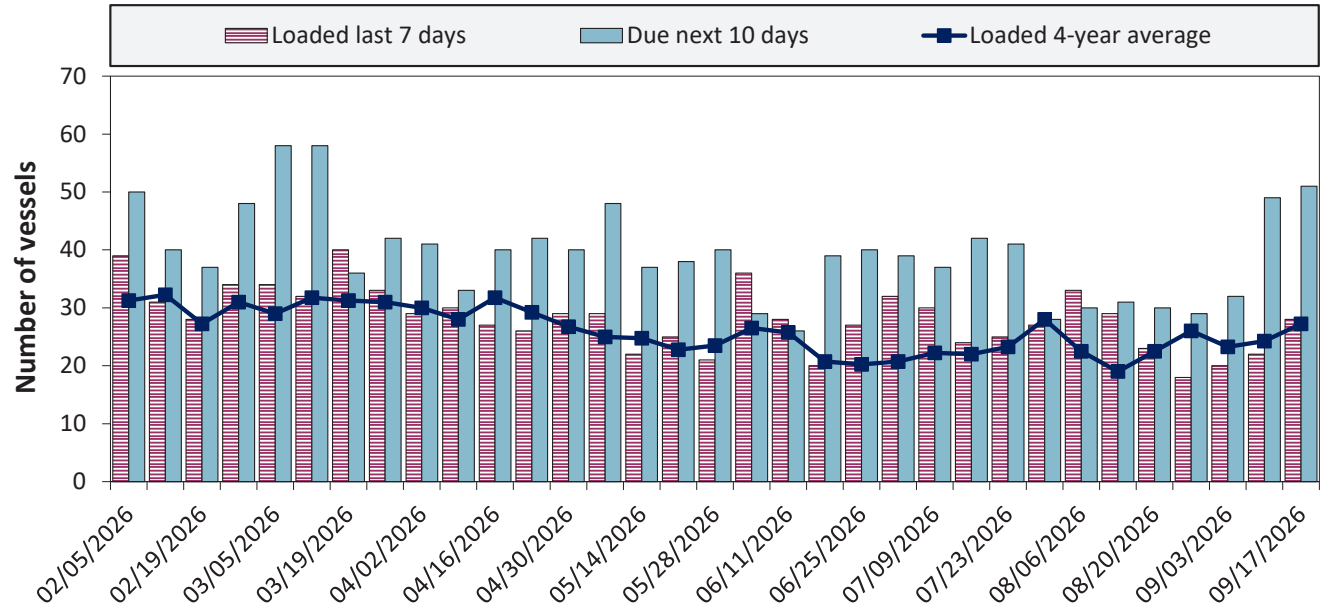
Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Table 19. Weekly port region grain ocean vessel activity (number of vessels)

Date	Gulf			Pacific Northwest
	In port	Loaded 7-days	Due next 10-days	In port
9/17/2026	21	28	51	14
9/10/2026	23	22	49	11
2025 range	(12…40)	(11…37)	(26…55)	(5…25)
2025 average	28	28	45	13

Note: The data are voluntarily submitted and may not be complete.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

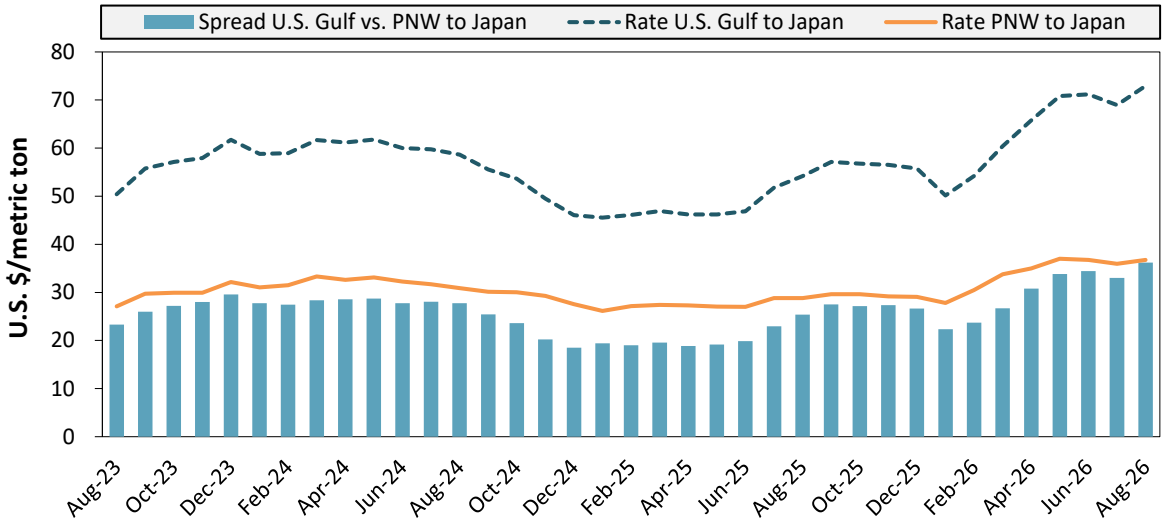
Figure 19. U.S. Gulf vessel loading activity



Week ending 09/17/26, number of vessels	Loaded	Due
Change from last year	-24%	21%
Change from 4-year average	3%	18%

Note: U.S. Gulf includes Mississippi, Texas, and the East Gulf region.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 20. U.S. Grain vessel rates, U.S. to Japan



Ocean rates	U.S. Gulf	PNW	Spread
August 2026	$72.94	$36.75	$36.19
Change from August 2025	35%	28%	43%
Change from 4-year average	28%	18%	40%

Note: PNW = Pacific Northwest.
Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting /World Perspectives, Inc.

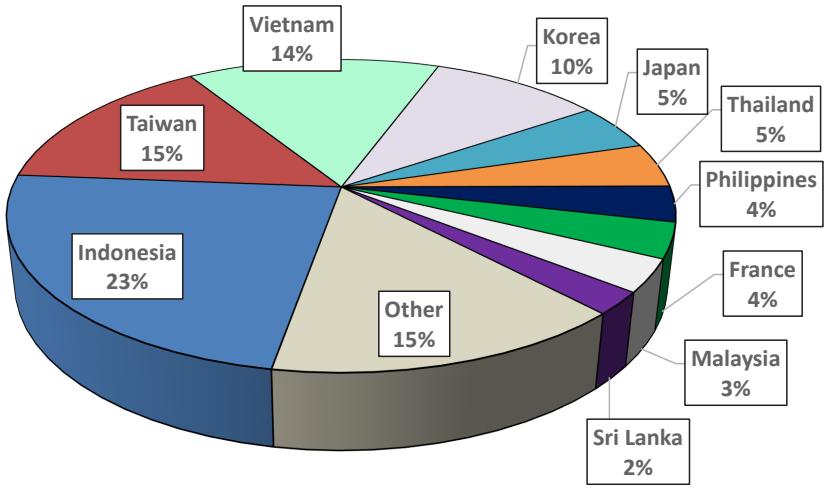
Table 20. Ocean freight rates for selected shipments, week ending 09/19/2026

Export region	Import region	Grain types	Entry date	Loading date	Volume loads (metric tons)	Freight rate (US$/metric ton)
U.S. Gulf	N. China	Heavy grain	Sep 3, 2026	Sep 20/30, 2026	68,000	76.00
U.S. Gulf	N. China	Heavy grain	Aug 28, 2026	Sep 1/10, 2026	68,000	73.50
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy grain	Aug 6, 2026	Sept 2/11, 2026	66,000	69.25
PNW	Japan	Heavy grain	Aug 14, 2026	Nov 1/15, 2026	65,000	41.00
PNW	China	Heavy grain	Aug 4, 2026	Sep 1/10, 2026	65,000	35.00
PNW	Taiwan	Wheat	Jun 5, 2026	Aug 1/15, 2026	59,000	47.95
Brazil	China	Heavy grain	Aug 19, 2026	Sep 15/20, 2026	64,000	51.15
Brazil	China	Heavy grain	Aug 12, 2026	Aug 20/30, 2026	63,000	50.50
Brazil	China	Heavy grain	Jul 29, 2026	Aug 21/30, 2026	63,000	49.75
Brazil	China	Heavy grain	Jul 29, 2026	Aug 15/20, 2026	63,000	50.00
Brazil	China	Heavy grain	Jul 24, 2026	Aug 14/19, 2026	66,000	52.00
Brazil	Poland	Heavy grain	Jul 8, 2026	Aug 14/21, 2026	60,000	30.90
Brazil	Jordan	Heavy grain	Jul 30, 2026	Aug 15/30, 2026	70,000	45.00
Brazil	Thailand	Heavy grain	Sep 17, 2026	Oct 14/19, 2026	63,000	54.50
River Plate	France	Heavy grain	Sep 17, 2026	Oct 1/11, 2026	50,000	44.00

Note: 50 percent of food aid from the United States is required to be shipped on U.S.-flag vessels. Rates shown are per metric ton (1 metric ton = 2,204.62 pounds), free on board (F.O.B.), except where otherwise indicated. op = option, PNW = Pacific Northwest.
Source: Maritime Research, Inc.

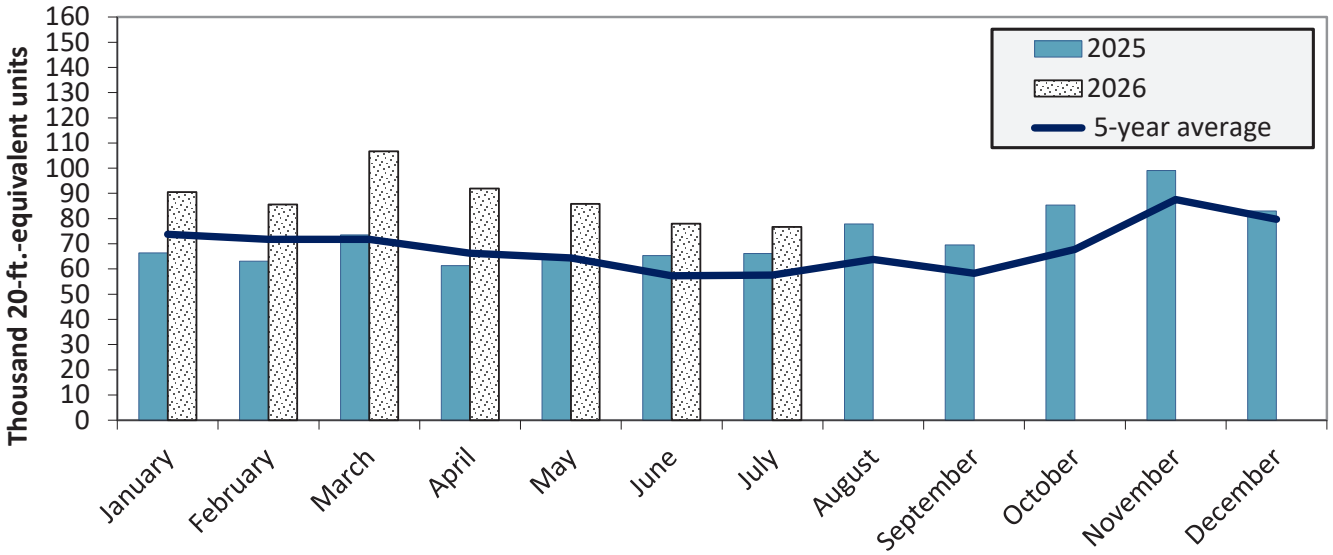
In 2025, containers were used to transport 11 percent of total U.S. waterborne grain exports. Approximately 48 percent of U.S. waterborne grain exports in 2025 went to Asia, of which 19 percent were moved in containers. Approximately 83 percent of U.S. waterborne containerized grain exports were destined for Asia.

Figure 21. Top 10 destination markets for U.S. containerized grain exports, Jan-Jun 2026



Note: The following harmonized tariff codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 1001, 100190, 100199, 100119, 1002, 100200, 1003, 100300, 1004, 100400, 1005, 100590, 1007, 100700, 100790, 110100, 1102, 110220, 110290, 1201, 120100, 120190, 120810, 230210, 230310, 230330, 2304, 230400, and 230990.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of PIERS data, S&P Global.

Figure 22. Monthly shipments of U.S. containerized grain exports



Containerized grain shipments in July 2026 were up 15.8 percent from last year and up 33.0 percent from the 5-year average.

Note: ft. = foot. The following harmonized tariff codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 1001, 100190, 100199, 100119, 1002, 100200, 1003, 100300, 1004, 100400, 1005, 100590, 1007, 100700, 100790, 110100, 1102, 110220, 110290, 1201, 120100, 120190, 120810, 230210, 230310, 230330, 2304, 230400, and 230990.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of PIERS data, S&P Global.

Title	Name	Email	Phone
Coordinators	Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo	surajudeen.olowolayemo@usda.gov	(202) 720-0119
	Maria Williams	maria.williams@usda.gov	(202) 690-4430
	Bernadette Winston	bernadette.winston@usda.gov	(202) 690-0487
Grain Transportation Indicators	Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo	surajudeen.olowolayemo@usda.gov	(202) 720-0119
Rail Transportation	Jesse Gastelle	jesse.gastelle@usda.gov	(202) 690-1144
	Peter Caffarelli	petera.caffarelli@usda.gov	(202) 690-3244
	Austin Hunt	austin.hunt@usda.gov	(540) 681-2596
Barge Transportation	Kranti Mulik	kranti.mulik@usda.gov	(202) 756-2577
	Edmund Outlaw	edmund.outlaw@usda.gov	(301) 448-0578
Truck Transportation	Kranti Mulik	kranti.mulik@usda.gov	(202) 756-2577
Grain Exports	Kranti Mulik	kranti.mulik@usda.gov	(202) 756-2577
	Bernadette Winston	bernadette.winston@usda.gov	(202) 690-0487
Ocean Transportation	Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo (Freight rates and vessels)	surajudeen.olowolayemo@usda.gov	(202) 720-0119
	Jesse Gastelle (Container movements)	jesse.gastelle@usda.gov	(202) 690-1144
Editor	Maria Williams	maria.williams@usda.gov	(202) 690-4430
Visual Information Specialists	Jessica Ladd	jessica.ladd@usda.gov	n/a
	Sharon C. Williams	sharonc.williams@usda.gov	(202) 720-2848

Subscription Information: Please sign up to receive regular email announcements of the latest GTR issue by **entering your email address** and selecting your preference to receive Transportation Research and Analysis. For any other information, you may contact us at **GTRContactUs@usda.gov**.

Preferred citation: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. *Grain Transportation Report*. September 24, 2026.
Web: **http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/TS056.09-24-2026**

Additional Transportation Research and Analysis resources include the ***Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory (GTOR)***, the ***Mexico Transport Cost Indicator Report***, and the ***Brazil Soybean Transportation Report***.

Photo Credit: Adobe Stock (unless otherwise noted by photo)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.