



Grain Transportation Report

A weekly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service
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October 8, 2020

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

DOT's Highway Trust Fund Extended for 1 Year

On October 1, President Trump signed a [continuing resolution](#) to extend Federal surface transportation programs for 1 year. The extension includes the \$13.6 billion for the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), which finances most Federal highway spending and is administered by the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Highway Administration. The extension is part of a larger package that will fund the entire Federal Government through December 11. The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) along with 80 other organizations had called for the 1-year extension. The stop-gap measure was essential because the previous law—known as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act—expired on September 30.

DOT Awards \$320.6 Million To Fund Railroad Projects

The Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) awarded \$320.6 million to 50 projects in 29 States to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail systems. The grants are part of the 5-year Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program, authorized by the 2015 FAST Act. At least 25 percent of the CRISI program funds must finance rural projects. In fiscal year 2020, over 60 percent of CRISI-funded projects were rural, and 32 of the 50 grant awards were in areas seeking private investment to revitalize economically distressed communities. A complete list of funded projects can be found [here](#).

New River Facility Expects to Revive Barge Traffic on the Northern Missouri River

[Construction has begun](#) on a new barge loading and unloading facility construction on the Missouri River at Mile 680.5 near Blencoe, IA. Expected to handle its first grain barge shipment by the end of 2020, the facility should bring barge traffic back to the Northern Missouri River, up to 760 river miles from St. Louis. Currently, more than 90 percent of the barge movements along the River are for sand, gravel, stone, rock, limestone, soil, and dredged material. The new farmer-owned facility plans to add more agricultural movements on the river, particularly for soybeans and corn. The facility could potentially shift some high-volume freight from roads to inland waterways in western Iowa. The last time barges could regularly travel this far north on the Missouri River was in the early 2000s.

FMC Extends Flexibility for Filing Service Contracts

The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) [extended its order](#) allowing service contracts to be filed up to 30 days after they take effect. Initially set to expire on December 31, the order will now remain in effect through June 1, 2021. The order is intended to provide relief to shippers, ocean container carriers, and freight forwarders and consolidators affected by COVID-19. The extension will provide flexibility to the ocean container shipping industry during the spring contract negotiation period.

Snapshots by Sector

Export Sales

For the week ending September 24, **unshipped balances** of wheat, corn, and soybeans totaled 60.5 million metric tons (mmt). This represented a significant increase in outstanding sales from the same time last year. Net **corn export sales** were 2.0 mmt, down 5 percent from the past week. Net **soybean export sales** were 2.6 mmt, down 19 percent from the previous week. Net weekly **wheat export sales** were 0.506 mmt, up 44 percent from the previous week.

Rail

U.S. Class I railroads originated 24,995 **grain carloads** during the week ending September 26. This was a 13-percent increase from the previous week, 39 percent more than last year, and 26 percent more than the 3-year average.

Average October shuttle **secondary railcar** bids/offers (per car) were \$981 above tariff for the week ending October 1. This was \$548 less than last week and \$919 more than this week last year. There were no non-shuttle bids/offers this week.

Barge

For the week ending October 3, **barge grain movements** totaled 812,700 tons. This was 59 percent more than the previous week and 60 percent more than the same period last year.

For the week ending October 3, 514 grain barges **moved down river**—202 barges more than the previous week. There were 913 grain barges **unloaded in New Orleans**, 28 percent more than the previous week.

Ocean

For the week ending October 1, 43 **oceangoing grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf—23 percent more than the same period last year. Within the next 10 days (starting October 2), 55 vessels were expected to be loaded—22 percent more than the same period last year.

As of October 1, the rate for shipping a metric ton (mt) of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was \$43.25. This was unchanged from the previous week. The rate from the Pacific Northwest to Japan was \$23.75 per mt, unchanged from the previous week.

Fuel

For the week ending October 5, the U.S. average **diesel fuel price** decreased 0.7 cent from the previous week to \$2.387 per gallon, 66 cents below the same week last year.

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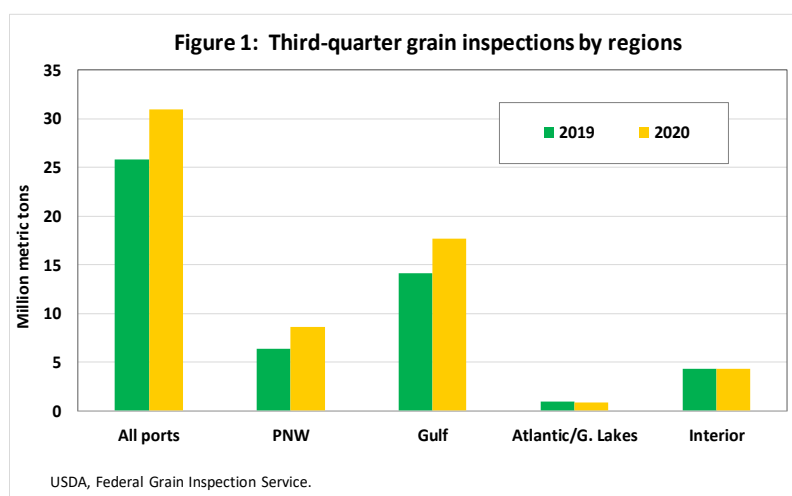
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Grain Inspections Rebound In Third Quarter 2020

From third quarter 2019 to third quarter 2020, inspections of grain (wheat, corn, and soybeans) rose 22 percent. At 31.4 million metric tons (mmt), third-quarter grain inspections reached their highest levels since third quarter 2018 and were up 10 percent from the 5-year average. Year to year, inspections of corn increased significantly; wheat increased moderately for the same period; and inspections of soybeans were down slightly.¹ Inspections of grain in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) increased significantly as well for the same time period, mainly responding to a huge jump in corn inspections and record-large wheat inspections, which were destined to Asia primarily for feed use. Both PNW and U.S. Gulf third-quarter inspections were near the 5-year average shares, which are about 25 percent for the PNW and 56 percent for the U.S. Gulf.

Total Inspections by Region

U.S. Gulf. Third-quarter grain inspections in the U.S. Gulf were 17.7 mmt, up 25 percent from year to year (fig. 1) and 8 percent above the 5-year average. These jumps were mainly due to a 50-percent increase in corn inspections and elevated demand from Asia and Latin America. The U.S. Gulf's share (58 percent) of total grain exports was also up year to year. Also, year to year, third-quarter rail deliveries of grain to the U.S. Gulf ports increased by 21 percent, and barge movements of grain through the Mississippi River locks to the U.S. Gulf increased by 14 percent as river conditions improved.



PNW. PNW grain inspections in the third quarter totaled 8.6 mmt, up 35 percent year to year (fig. 1) and 13 percent above the 5-year average, mainly owing to increased Asian demand for corn and wheat inspections. PNW soybean inspections, however, decreased significantly from year to year because of a large drop in shipments to China. Rail deliveries of grain to PNW ports increased by 31 percent year to year as Asian demand for grain increased.

Atlantic-Great Lakes. Third-quarter grain inspections for the Atlantic-Great Lakes region totaled .875 mmt, down 7 percent year to year and 17 percent below the 5-year average. Year to year, corn inspections increased by 22 percent; soybean inspections decreased by 10 percent as demand dropped from Asia and Europe; and wheat inspections were down slightly.

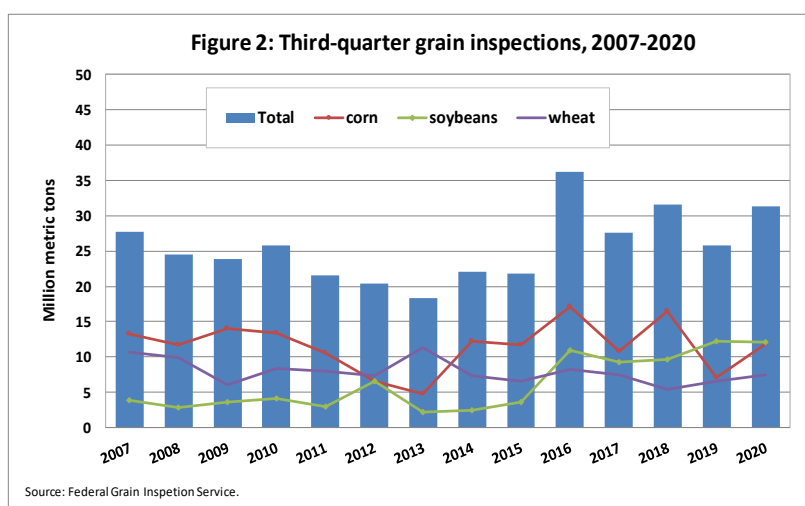
Interior. Third-quarter Interior inspections of grain totaled 4.3 mmt, down 1 percent from year to year and 16 percent above the 5-year average. The Interior accounted for 14 percent of the U.S. total third-quarter grain inspections. Mexico accounted for 79 percent of total Interior grain inspections, up slightly year to year. Asia accounted for 21 percent of total Interior grain inspections. Compared to the same time last year, Interior soybean and wheat inspections each decreased by 15 percent, but corn increased by 16 percent as demand from Mexico remained fairly strong. At 2.2 mmt, U.S. Interior corn inspected for export to Mexico in the third quarter increased by 16 percent year to year as demand increased for livestock feed and for processed foods. Soybean inspections in the Interior destined to Mexico, however, decreased by 17 percent year to year as competition from South America and Europe increased.

¹ Throughout this article, “year to year” describes changes from third quarter 2019 to third quarter 2020.

Corn and Soybean Inspections

U.S. corn inspections totaled 11.8 mmt in the third quarter, up 67 percent from year to year (fig. 2). Although third-quarter U.S. corn exports were unusually low, they were only 6 percent below the 5-year average (because extremely low corn exports in third quarter 2019 lowered the average). Year to year, third-quarter PNW corn inspections (3 mmt) rose by 311 percent as shipments to Asia increased. U.S. Gulf corn inspections (6.5 mmt) rose by 50 percent as shipments to Latin America and Asia increased. Third-quarter Interior corn inspections reached a record 2.3 mmt, up 16 percent year to year. Third-quarter Atlantic-Great Lakes corn inspections rebounded from a record low last year. Year to year, total third-quarter inspections of corn shipped to Asia from all port regions increased by 138 percent as a result of rising demand for livestock feed, and corn inspections destined to Latin America increased by 32 percent as higher domestic feed use tightened supplies.

Third-quarter soybean inspections were 12.1 mmt, up 2 percent year to year (fig. 2) and 32 percent above the 5-year average. At 6.2 mmt, inspections of soybeans destined to China rose 11 percent from last year, accounting for 52 percent of total U.S. third-quarter soybean inspections. About 66 percent of U.S. third-quarter soybean exports were destined to Asia. Third-quarter PNW soybean inspections were 1.5 mmt, down 39 percent from last year, primarily because of declining shipments to China. Soybean inspections in the U.S. Gulf were 8.6 mmt during the same quarter, up 17 percent from last year and 33 percent above the 5-year average as shipments to Latin America rebounded. Interior soybean inspections reached 1.5 mmt, down 15 percent year to year as Asian demand dropped. Third-quarter Atlantic-Great Lakes soybean inspections decreased by 21 percent from year to year, but were 65 percent above the 5-year average mainly because of lower shipments to Asia and Europe.



Wheat Inspections

Inspections of wheat totaled 7.5 mmt during third quarter 2020, 15 percent above last year (fig. 2) and 10 percent above the 5-year average owing to strong demand from Asia. U.S. Gulf wheat inspections were up 6 percent year to year and 3 percent above the 5-year average. As demand from Asia continued to increase, wheat inspections in the PNW reached a record 4.1 mmt, up 30 percent year to year and 20 percent above average. Interior third-

quarter wheat inspections were down 15 percent year to year, mainly because of lower exports to Mexico. Atlantic-Great Lakes wheat inspections were down 3 percent year to year. At 3.8 mmt, third-quarter export total inspections of wheat destined to Asia increased by 19 percent year to year. At 1.8 mmt, total wheat inspected for export to Latin America decreased by 25 percent year to year.

Market Outlook

According to the USDA's September *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates*, exports of corn, soybeans, and wheat are expected to increase by 23 percent for marketing year (MY) 2020/21 from MY 2019/20 (*September 17, 2020, Grain Transportation Report (GTR)*). From MY 2019/20 to MY 2020/21, corn exports are projected to increase 32 percent, and soybean exports are projected to increase 26 percent. For the same period, wheat exports are expected to increase slightly. Compared with MY 2019/20, cumulative (shipped) export sales are currently up 69 percent for corn, up 62 percent for soybeans, and up slightly for wheat. (See *GTR table 12*). Johnny.Hill@usda.gov

Grain Transportation Indicators

Table 1

Grain transport cost indicators¹

For the week ending	Truck	Rail		Barge*	Ocean	
		Unit train	Shuttle		Gulf	Pacific
10/07/20	160	288	262	280	193	168
09/30/20	161	280	287	261	193	168

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); ocean = routes to Japan (\$/metric ton);

*Due to the closure of several lock and dam facilities on Illinois River between July 1 and October 27, 2020, mid-Mississippi barge rate was substituted for Illinois rate as the benchmark for calculating cost index during the closures.

n/a = not available.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 2

Market Update: U.S. origins to export position price spreads (\$/bushel)

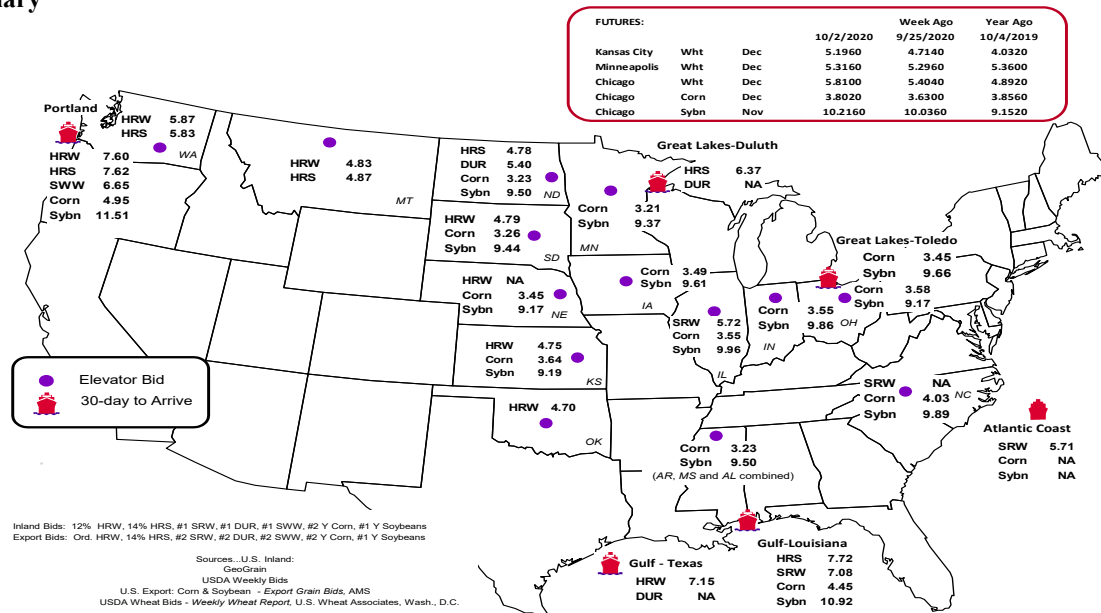
Commodity	Origin-destination	10/2/2020	9/25/2020
Corn	IL-Gulf	-0.90	-0.88
Corn	NE-Gulf	-1.00	-1.00
Soybean	IA-Gulf	-1.31	-1.35
HRW	KS-Gulf	-2.40	-2.43
HRS	ND-Portland	-2.84	-2.78

Note: nq = no quote; n/a = not available; HRW = hard red winter wheat; HRS = hard red spring wheat.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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

For the week ending	Mississippi		Pacific	Atlantic &	Total	Week ending	Cross-border Mexico ³
	Gulf	Texas Gulf	Northwest	East Gulf			
9/30/2020 ^p	1,945	1,451	6,077	391	9,864	9/26/2020	2,362
9/23/2020 ^r	1,075	1,532	7,142	268	10,017	9/19/2020	2,941
2020 YTD ^r	22,154	37,805	192,453	8,336	260,748	2020 YTD	96,057
2019 YTD ^r	35,606	43,857	194,350	13,766	287,579	2019 YTD	102,909
2020 YTD as % of 2019 YTD	62	86	99	61	91	% change YTD	93
Last 4 weeks as % of 2019 ²	304	178	179	217	192	Last 4wks. % 2019	94
Last 4 weeks as % of 4-year avg. ²	221	114	148	145	148	Last 4wks. % 4 yr.	86
Total 2019	40,974	51,167	251,181	16,192	359,514	Total 2019	127,622
Total 2018	22,118	46,532	310,449	21,432	400,531	Total 2018	129,674

¹Data is incomplete as it is voluntarily provided.

²Compared with same 4-weeks in 2019 and prior 4-year average.

³Cross-border weekly data is approximately 15 percent below the Association of American Railroads' reported weekly carloads received by Mexican railroads to reflect switching between Kansas City Southern de Mexico (KCSM) and Grupo Mexico.

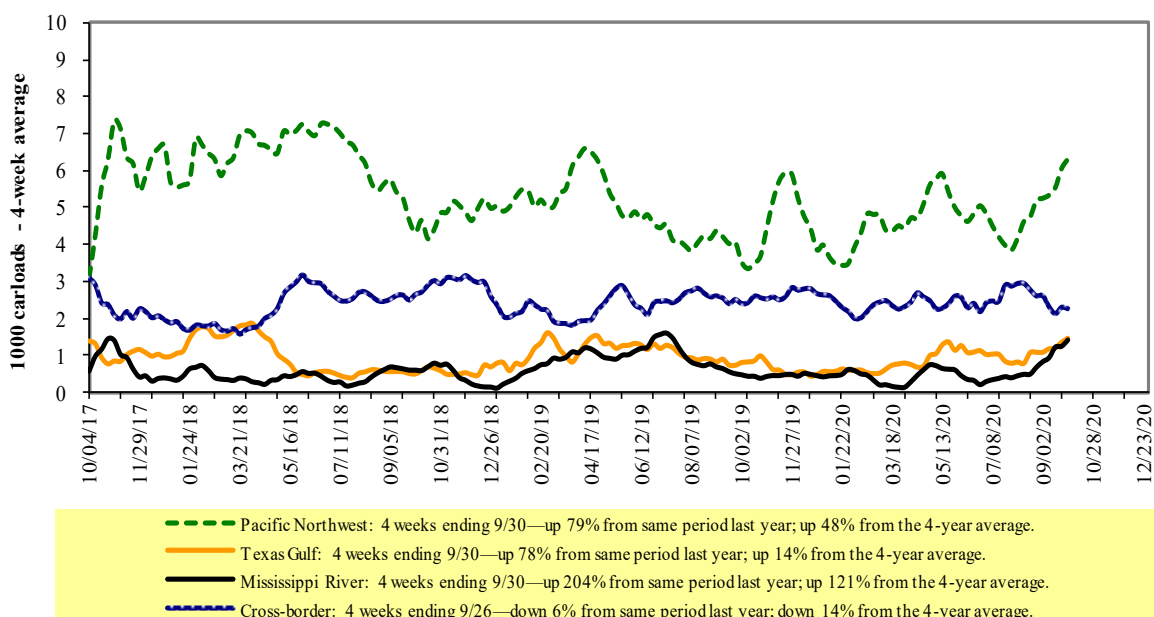
YTD = year-to-date; p = preliminary data; r = revised data; n/a = not available; wks. = weeks; avg. = average.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 4

Class I rail carrier grain car bulletin (grain carloads originated)

For the week ending: 9/26/2020	East		West			U.S. total	Canada	
	CSXT	NS	BNSF	KCS	UP		CN	CP
This week	1,582	1,825	13,936	1,428	6,224	24,995	4,368	5,402
This week last year	1,739	2,081	8,448	1,444	4,221	17,933	3,679	4,322
2020 YTD	63,305	92,070	424,076	41,163	201,932	822,546	161,060	179,955
2019 YTD	70,652	106,754	424,446	43,990	197,832	843,674	156,666	172,068
2020 YTD as % of 2019 YTD	90	86	100	94	102	97	103	105
Last 4 weeks as % of 2019*	91	97	138	101	134	126	144	113
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr. avg.**	101	86	123	118	123	117	118	112
Total 2019	91,611	136,963	568,369	58,527	260,269	1,115,739	212,507	235,892

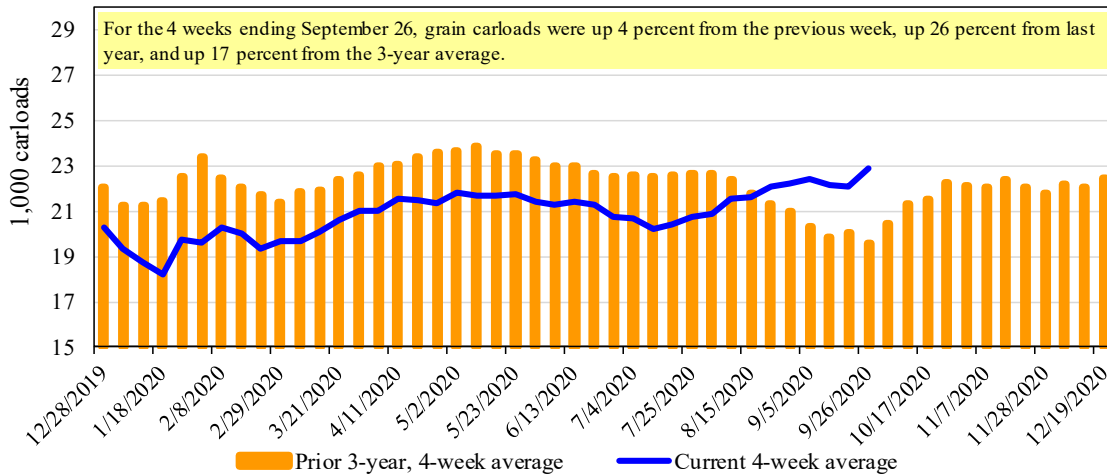
*The past 4 weeks of this year as a percent of the same 4 weeks last year.

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

Note: NS = Norfolk Southern; KCS = Kansas City Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CP = Canadian Pacific.

Source: Association of American Railroads.

Figure 3

Total weekly U.S. Class I railroad grain carloads

Source: Association of American Railroads.

Table 5

Railcar auction offerings¹ (\$/car)²

For the week ending: 10/1/2020		Delivery period							
		Oct-20	Oct-19	Nov-20	Nov-19	Dec-20	Dec-19	Jan-21	Jan-20
BNSF ³	COT grain units	no offer	0	207	0	92	0	0	no offer
	COT grain single-car	no offer	1	135	0	205	0	144	no offer
UP ⁴	GCAS/Region 1	no offer	no offer	no offer	no offer	no offer	no offer	n/a	n/a
	GCAS/Region 2	no offer	no bid	no offer	no bid	no offer	no offer	n/a	n/a

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

²Average premium/discount to tariff, last auction. n/a = not available.

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

⁴UP - GCAS = Union Pacific Railroad Grain Car Allocation System.

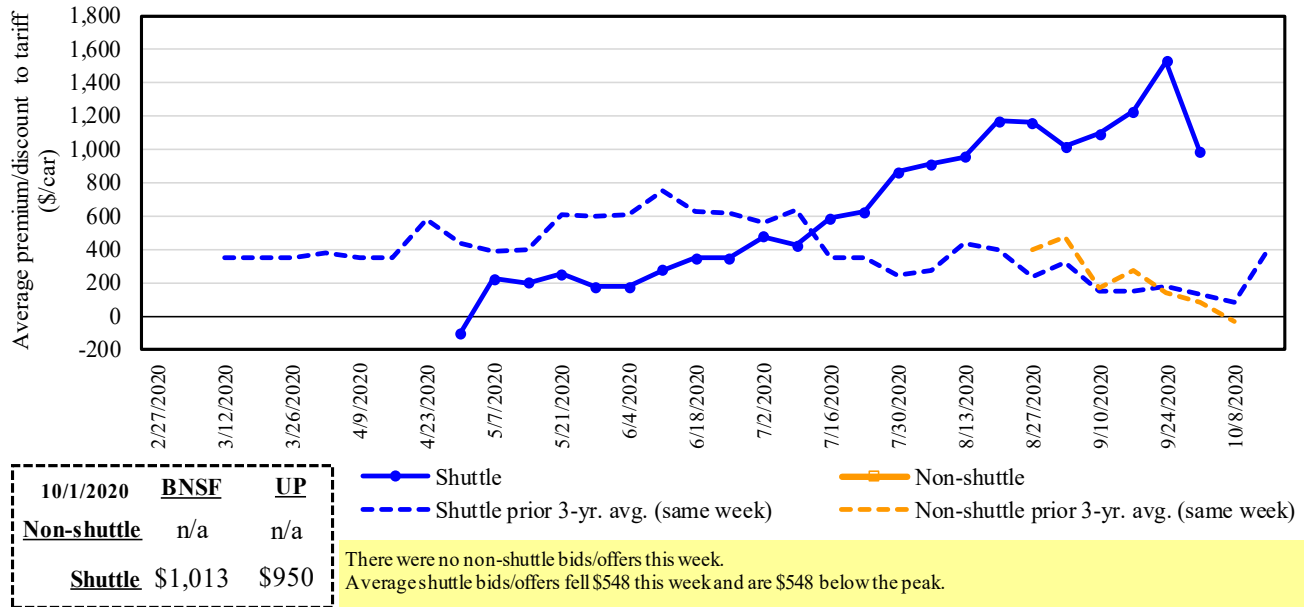
Region 1 includes: AR, IL, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX, WI, and Duluth, MN.

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

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

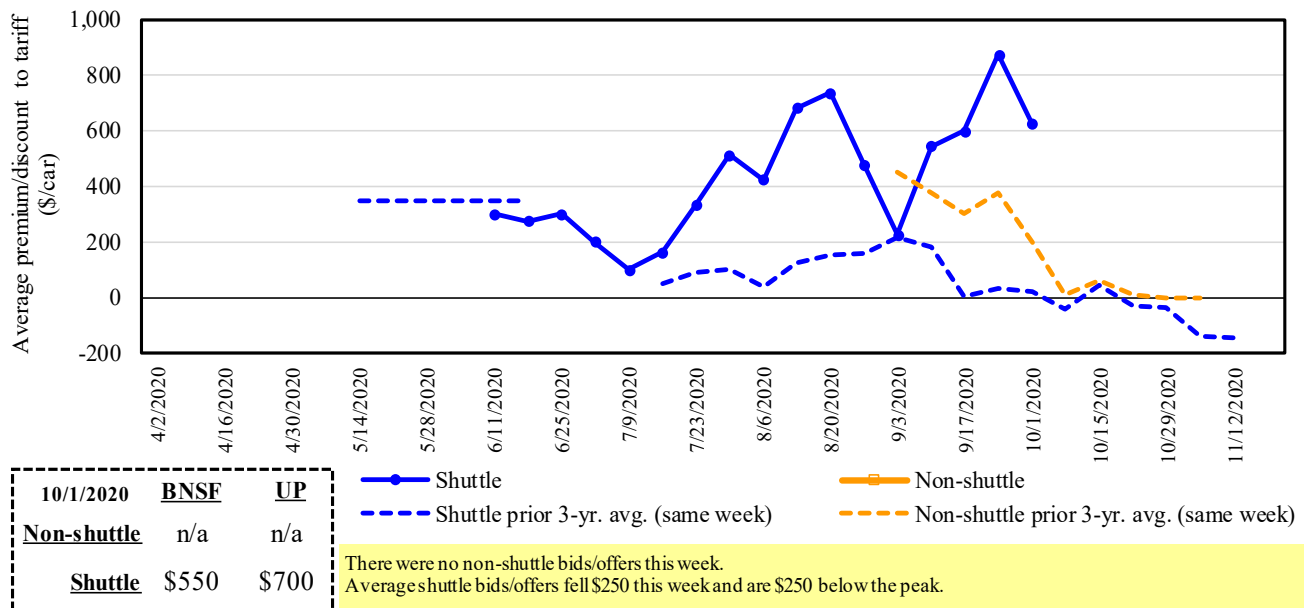
The **secondary rail market** information reflects trade values for service that was originally purchased from the railroad carrier as some form of guaranteed freight. The **auction and secondary rail** values are indicators of rail service quality and demand/supply.

Figure 4
Bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in October 2020, secondary market



Note: Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
 Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

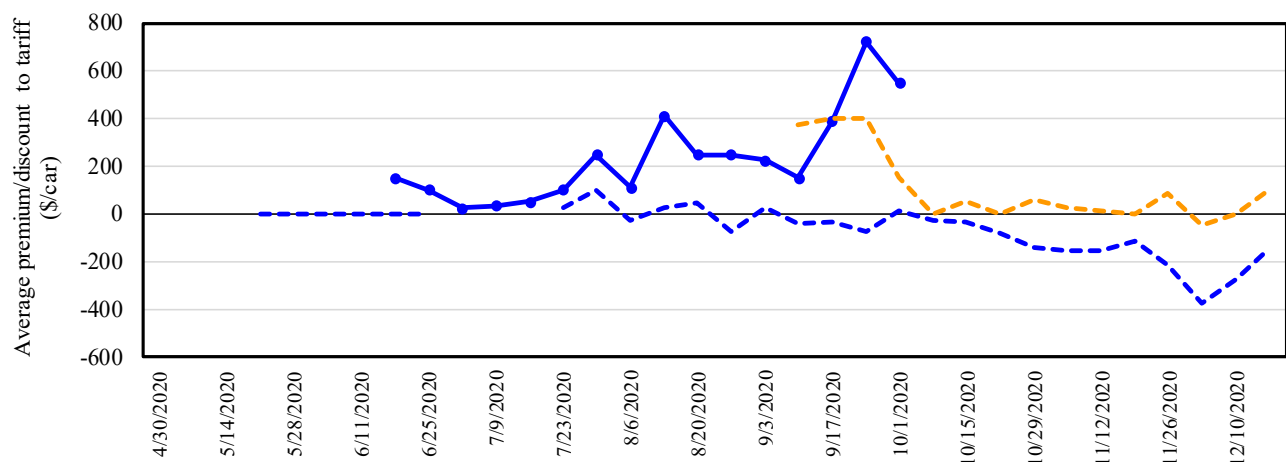
Figure 5
Bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in November 2020, secondary market



Note: Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
 Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 6

Bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in December 2020, secondary market



10/1/2020	BNSF	UP	Shuttle	Non-shuttle
Non-shuttle	n/a	n/a	Shuttle prior 3-yr. avg. (same week)	Non-shuttle prior 3-yr. avg. (same week)
Shuttle	\$600	\$500	There were no non-shuttle bids/offers this week. Average shuttle bids/offers fell \$175 this week and are \$175 below the peak.	

Note: Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 6

Weekly secondary railcar market (\$/car)¹

For the week ending:		Delivery period					
		Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21
Non-shuttle	BNSF-GF	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 2019	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP-Pool	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 2019	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle	BNSF-GF	1013	550	600	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	(570)	(300)	(200)	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2019	913	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP-Pool	950	700	500	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	(525)	(200)	(150)	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2019	925	750	500	n/a	n/a	n/a

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

Note: Bids listed are market indicators only and are not guaranteed prices. n/a = not available; GF = guaranteed freight; Pool = guaranteed pool;

BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.

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

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

The **tariff rail rate** is the base price of freight rail service. Together with **fuel surcharges** and any **auction and secondary rail** values, the tariff rail rate constitutes 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. However, during times of high rail demand or short supply, high auction and secondary rail values can exceed the cost of the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge.

Table 7

Tariff rail rates for unit and shuttle train shipments¹

October 2020	Origin region ³	Destination region ³	Tariff rate/car	Fuel surcharge per car	Tariff plus surcharge per:		Percent change Y/Y ⁴
					metric ton	bushel ²	
Unit train							
Wheat	Wichita, KS	St. Louis, MO	\$3,983	\$35	\$39.90	\$1.09	-1
	Grand Forks, ND	Duluth-Superior, MN	\$4,208	\$0	\$41.79	\$1.14	-3
	Wichita, KS	Los Angeles, CA	\$7,115	\$0	\$70.66	\$1.92	-2
	Wichita, KS	New Orleans, LA	\$4,525	\$62	\$45.55	\$1.24	-2
	Sioux Falls, SD	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$6,851	\$0	\$68.03	\$1.85	-2
	Colby, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$4,801	\$68	\$48.35	\$1.32	-2
	Amarillo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	\$5,121	\$95	\$51.80	\$1.41	-3
Corn	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$3,900	\$70	\$39.43	\$1.00	-3
	Toledo, OH	Raleigh, NC	\$7,833	\$0	\$77.79	\$1.98	15
	Des Moines, IA	Davenport, IA	\$2,455	\$15	\$24.53	\$0.62	1
	Indianapolis, IN	Atlanta, GA	\$5,979	\$0	\$59.37	\$1.51	3
	Indianapolis, IN	Knoxville, TN	\$5,040	\$0	\$50.05	\$1.27	3
	Des Moines, IA	Little Rock, AR	\$3,900	\$44	\$39.16	\$0.99	1
	Des Moines, IA	Los Angeles, CA	\$5,780	\$128	\$58.67	\$1.49	-2
Soybeans	Minneapolis, MN	New Orleans, LA	\$3,631	\$37	\$36.43	\$0.99	-4
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	\$6,595	\$0	\$65.49	\$1.78	17
	Indianapolis, IN	Raleigh, NC	\$7,125	\$0	\$70.75	\$1.93	3
	Indianapolis, IN	Huntsville, AL	\$5,247	\$0	\$52.11	\$1.42	3
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$4,645	\$70	\$46.83	\$1.27	-2
Shuttle train							
Wheat	Great Falls, MT	Portland, OR	\$4,018	\$0	\$39.90	\$1.09	-3
	Wichita, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$4,236	\$0	\$42.07	\$1.14	-3
	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	\$6,376	\$0	\$63.32	\$1.72	-10
	Grand Forks, ND	Portland, OR	\$5,676	\$0	\$56.37	\$1.53	-2
	Grand Forks, ND	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$5,996	\$0	\$59.54	\$1.62	-2
	Colby, KS	Portland, OR	\$6,012	\$112	\$60.81	\$1.66	-3
Corn	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	\$5,180	\$0	\$51.44	\$1.31	0
	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	\$5,140	\$0	\$51.04	\$1.30	0
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$3,820	\$70	\$38.63	\$0.98	-3
	Lincoln, NE	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$3,880	\$0	\$38.53	\$0.98	0
	Des Moines, IA	Amarillo, TX	\$4,320	\$55	\$43.45	\$1.10	0
	Minneapolis, MN	Tacoma, WA	\$5,180	\$0	\$51.44	\$1.31	0
	Council Bluffs, IA	Stockton, CA	\$5,100	\$0	\$50.65	\$1.29	2
Soybeans	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	\$5,850	\$0	\$58.09	\$1.58	0
	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	\$5,900	\$0	\$58.59	\$1.59	0
	Fargo, ND	Tacoma, WA	\$5,750	\$0	\$57.10	\$1.55	0
	Council Bluffs, IA	New Orleans, LA	\$4,875	\$81	\$49.22	\$1.34	-3
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	\$4,945	\$0	\$49.11	\$1.34	3
	Grand Island, NE	Portland, OR	\$5,260	\$115	\$53.37	\$1.45	-13

¹A unit train refers to shipments of at least 25 cars. Shuttle train rates are generally 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 pounds per bushel (lbs/bu), wheat and soybeans 60 lbs/bu.

³Regional economic areas are defined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

⁴Percentage change year over year (Y/Y) calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surcharge.

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

Table 8

Tariff rail rates for U.S. bulk grain shipments to Mexico

Date: October 2020			Tariff rate per car ¹	Fuel surcharge per car ²	Tariff rate plus fuel surcharge per:		Percent change ⁴ Y/Y
Commodity	Origin state	Destination region			metric ton ³	bushel ³	
Wheat	MT	Chihuahua, CI	\$7,384	\$0	\$75.45	\$2.05	-2
	OK	Cuautitlan, EM	\$6,713	\$49	\$69.08	\$1.88	-2
	KS	Guadalajara, JA	\$7,471	\$413	\$80.55	\$2.19	-3
	TX	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$4,329	\$29	\$44.53	\$1.21	-1
Corn	IA	Guadalajara, JA	\$8,902	\$331	\$94.34	\$2.39	-2
	SD	Celaya, GJ	\$8,140	\$0	\$83.17	\$2.11	0
	NE	Queretaro, QA	\$8,300	\$99	\$85.82	\$2.18	-2
	SD	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$6,905	\$0	\$70.55	\$1.79	0
	MO	Tlahpantla, EM	\$7,665	\$97	\$79.30	\$2.01	-2
	SD	Torreon, CU	\$7,690	\$0	\$78.57	\$1.99	0
Soybeans	MO	Bojay (Tula), HG	\$8,547	\$312	\$90.52	\$2.46	-2
	NE	Guadalajara, JA	\$9,157	\$321	\$96.83	\$2.63	-2
	IA	El Castillo, JA	\$9,410	\$0	\$96.15	\$2.61	-1
	KS	Torreon, CU	\$8,014	\$212	\$84.05	\$2.29	-1
Sorghum	NE	Celaya, GJ	\$7,772	\$285	\$82.33	\$2.09	-2
	KS	Queretaro, QA	\$8,108	\$61	\$83.46	\$2.12	-1
	NE	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$6,713	\$49	\$69.09	\$1.75	-1
	NE	Torreon, CU	\$7,092	\$187	\$74.38	\$1.89	-3

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.

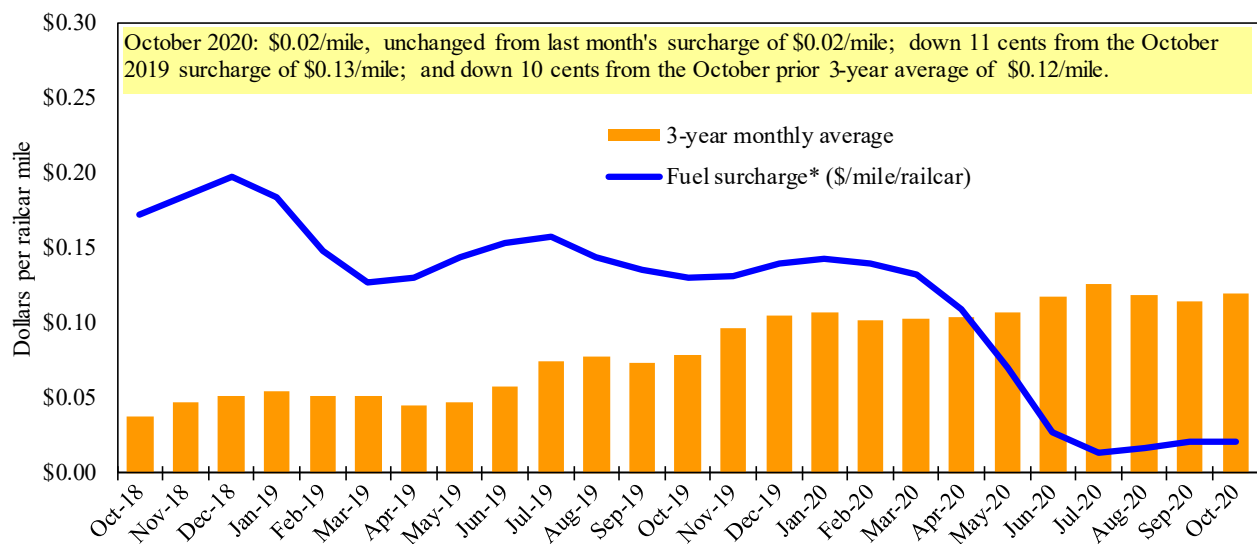
²Fuel surcharge adjusted to reflect the change in Ferrocarril Mexicano, S.A. de C.V railroad fuel surcharge policy as of 10/01/2009.

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

⁴Percentage change calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surcharge; Y/Y = year over year.

Sources: BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, Kansas City Southern.

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.

* Beginning January 2009, the Canadian Pacific fuel surcharge is computed by a monthly average of the bi-weekly fuel surcharge.

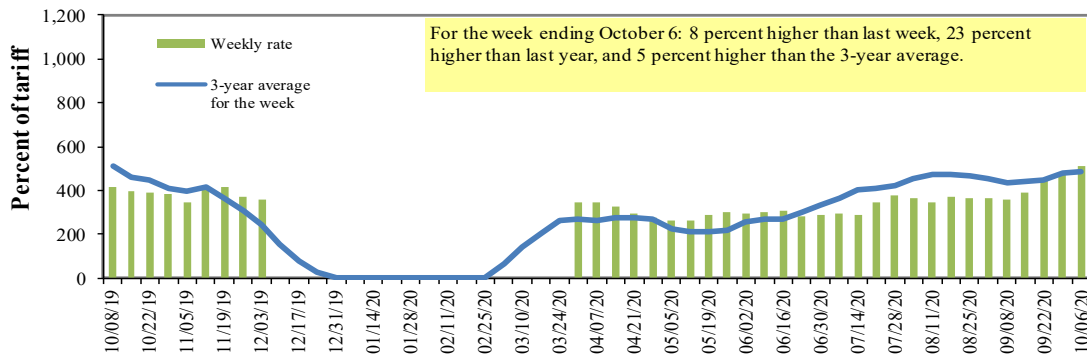
**CSX strike price changed from \$2.00/gal. to \$3.75/gal. starting January 1, 2015.

Sources: BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway, CSX Transportation, Canadian Pacific Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, Kansas City Southern Railway, Norfolk Southern Corporation.

Barge Transportation

Figure 8a

Mid-Mississippi 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: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 9

Weekly barge freight rates: Southbound only

		Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Lower Illinois River	St. Louis	Cincinnati	Lower Ohio	Cairo-Memphis
Rate ¹	10/6/2020	520	513	-	430	423	423	402
	9/29/2020	510	477	-	361	424	424	332
\$/ton	10/6/2020	32.19	27.29	-	17.16	19.84	17.09	12.62
	9/29/2020	31.57	25.38	-	14.40	19.89	17.13	10.42
Current week % change from the same week:								
	Last year	36	23	-	-1	-7	-7	8
	3-year avg. ²	7	5	-	-1	-16	-16	-11
Rate ¹	September	512	430	-	308	369	369	289
	November	0	0	420	278	316	316	258

¹Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); ²4-week moving average; ton = 2,000 pounds; "-" not available due to closure.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 9 Benchmark tariff rates

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

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

Map Credit: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service

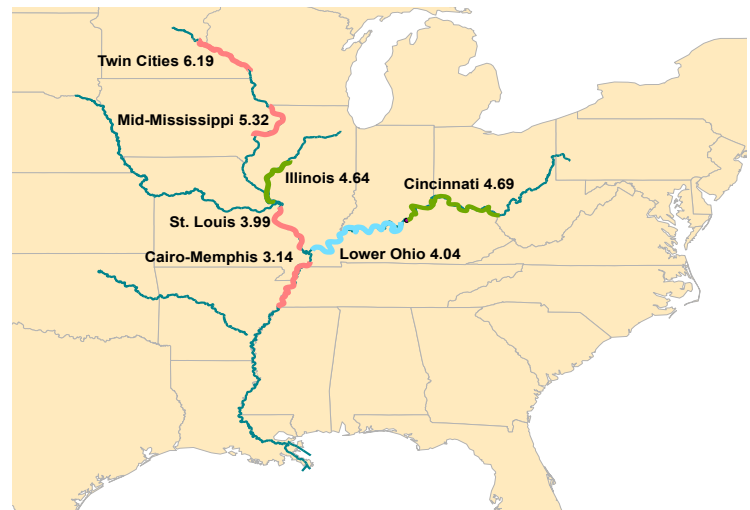
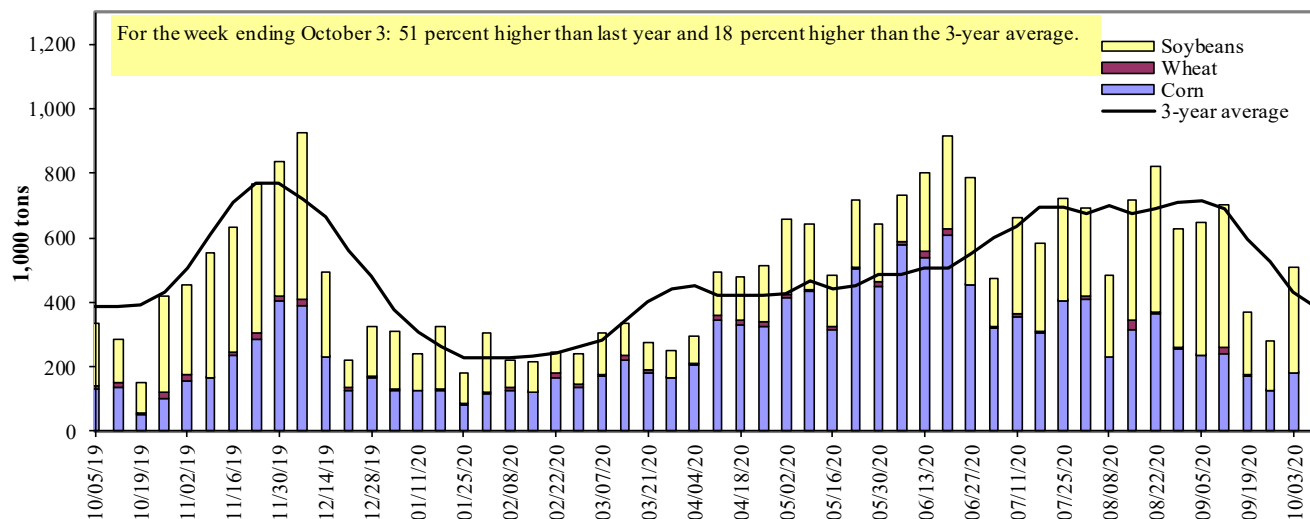


Figure 10

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)

For the week ending 10/03/2020	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River					
Rock Island, IL (L15)	86	0	157	0	243
Winfield, MO (L25)	146	2	324	0	471
Alton, IL (L26)	189	2	376	0	567
Granite City, IL (L27)	181	2	326	0	509
Illinois River (La Grange)					
	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio River (Olmsted)					
	164	0	84	0	248
Arkansas River (L1)					
	0	38	18	0	56
Weekly total - 2020	345	39	429	0	813
Weekly total - 2019	233	8	263	4	507
2020 YTD ¹	14,060	1,532	11,342	121	27,055
2019 YTD ¹	9,587	1,305	9,567	134	20,593
2020 as % of 2019 YTD	147	117	119	90	131
Last 4 weeks as % of 2019 ²	123	142	107	41	114
Total 2019	12,780	1,631	14,683	154	29,247

¹ Weekly total, YTD (year-to-date), and calendar year total include MS/27, OH/Olmsted, and AR/1; Other refers to oats, barley, sorghum, and rye. L (as in "L15") refers to a lock or lock and dam facility. Olmsted = Olmsted Locks and Dam. La Grange = La Grange Lock and Dam.

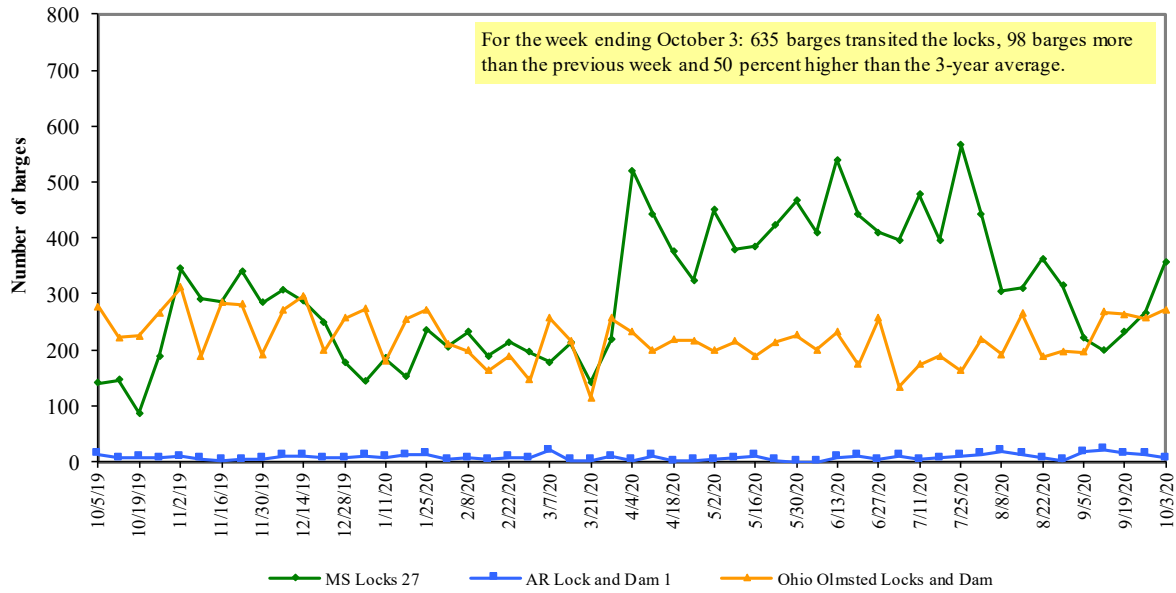
² As a percent of same period in 2019.

Note: Total may not add exactly because of rounding. Starting from 11/24/2018, weekly movement through Ohio 52 is replaced by Olmsted.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Figure 11

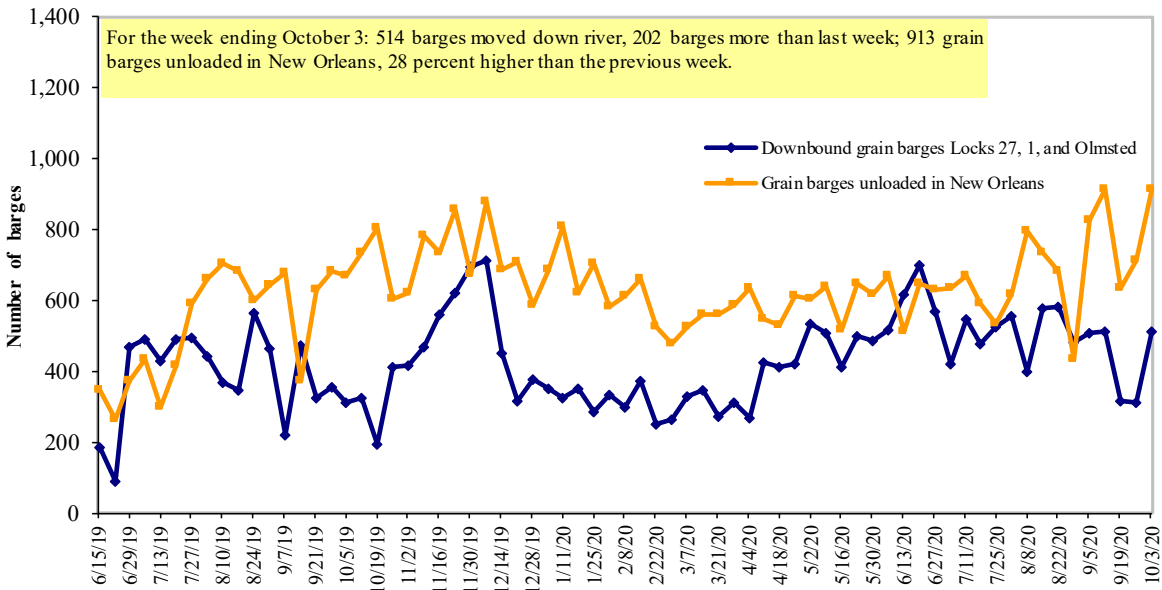
Upbound empty barges transiting Mississippi River Locks 27, Arkansas River Lock and Dam 1, and Ohio River Olmsted Locks and Dam



Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Figure 12

Grain barges for export in New Orleans region



Note: Olmsted = Olmsted Locks and Dam.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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 prices, week ending 10/5/2020 (U.S. \$/gallon)

Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	2.473	0.000	-0.568
	New England	2.577	-0.015	-0.470
	Central Atlantic	2.655	-0.003	-0.569
	Lower Atlantic	2.328	0.005	-0.587
II	Midwest	2.259	-0.010	-0.708
III	Gulf Coast	2.141	-0.013	-0.663
IV	Rocky Mountain	2.319	-0.017	-0.703
	West Coast	2.928	0.000	-0.714
V	West Coast less California	2.534	-0.020	-0.681
	California	3.252	0.016	-0.729
Total	United States	2.387	-0.007	-0.660

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

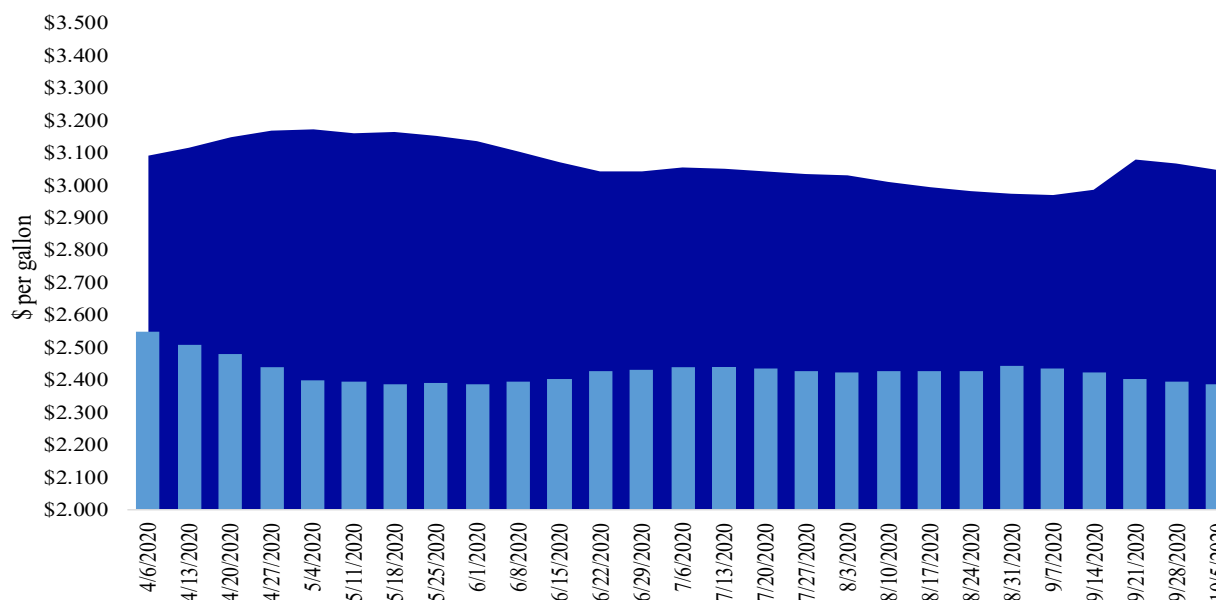
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration.

Figure 13

Weekly diesel fuel prices, U.S. average

For the week ending October 5, the U.S. average diesel fuel price decreased 0.7 cent from the previous week to \$2.387 per gallon, 66.0 cents below the same week last year.

■ Last year \$3.047
■ Current year \$2.387



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, Retail On-Highway Diesel Prices.

Grain Exports

Table 12

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

For the week ending	Wheat					All wheat	Corn	Soybeans	Total
	HRW	SRW	HRS	SWW	DUR				
Export balances¹									
9/24/2020	1,633	321	1,710	1,305	234	5,202	21,879	33,448	60,529
This week year ago	1,247	633	1,438	940	208	4,466	8,105	11,305	23,876
Cumulative exports-marketing year²									
2020/21 YTD	3,658	807	2,346	1,679	299	8,788	2,743	4,681	16,212
2019/20 YTD	3,633	1,040	2,115	1,414	237	8,439	1,607	2,854	12,899
YTD 2020/21 as % of 2019/20	101	78	111	119	126	104	171	164	126
Last 4 wks. as % of same period 2019/20*	137	69	123	135	118	121	248	276	238
Total 2019/20	9,526	2,318	6,960	4,751	922	24,477	42,622	43,994	111,094
Total 2018/19	8,591	3,204	6,776	5,164	479	24,214	48,924	46,189	119,327

¹ Current unshipped (outstanding) export sales to date.

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

Note: marketing year: wheat = 6/01-5/31, corn and soybeans = 9/01-8/31. YTD = year-to-date; wks. = weeks; HRW= hard red winter; SRW = soft red winter; HRS= hard red spring; SWW= soft white wheat; DUR= durum.

Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 13

Top 5 importers¹ of U.S. corn

For the week ending 09/24/2020	Total commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr. avg. 2017-19
	2020/21 current MY	2019/20 last MY		
	- 1,000 mt -			
Mexico	4,346	5,336	(19)	14,869
Japan	2,924	1,258	132	11,221
Columbia	900	269	235	4,830
Korea	346	70	395	4,011
China	9,957	60	-	909
Top 5 importers	18,473	6,993	164	35,840
Total U.S. corn export sales	24,622	9,712	154	49,983
% of projected exports	42%	22%		
Change from prior week ²	2,027	563		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	75%	72%		72%
USDA forecast September 2020	59,160	44,911	32	
Corn use for ethanol USDA forecast, September 2020	129,540	123,317	5	

¹Based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for 2018/19; marketing year (MY) = Sep 1 - Aug 31.

²Cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), 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.

³FAS marketing year ranking reports (carry over plus accumulated export); yr. = year; avg. = average.

Note: A red number in parentheses indicates a negative number; mt = metric ton.

Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 14

Top 5 importers¹ of U.S. soybeans

For the week ending 9/24/2020	Total commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr. avg. 2017-19
	2020/21 current MY	2019/20 last MY		
	1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
China	20,570	3,613	469	19,106
Mexico	1,930	2,175	(11)	4,591
Egypt	514	578	(11)	2,980
Indonesia	540	401	35	2,360
Japan	591	608	(3)	2,288
Top 5 importers	24,145	7,375	227	31,324
Total U.S. soybean export sales	38,129	14,159	169	49,352
% of projected exports	66%	31%		
change from prior week ²	2,591	2,010		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	63%	52%		63%
USDA forecast, September 2020	57,902	45,777	126	

¹Based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for 2018/19; marketing year (MY) = Sep 1 - Aug 31.

²Cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), FAS weekly export sales report, or export sales query. The total commitments change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous week's outstanding sales and/or accumulated sales.

³FAS marketing year ranking reports (carryover plus accumulated export); yr. = year; avg. = average.

Note: A red number in parentheses indicates a negative number; mt = metric ton.

Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 15

Top 10 importers¹ of all U.S. wheat

For the week ending 9/24/2020	Total commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr. avg. 2017-19
	2020/21 current MY	2019/20 last MY		
	1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
Mexico	1,601	1,947	(18)	3,213
Philippines	1,993	1,550	29	2,888
Japan	1,355	1,317	3	2,655
Nigeria	642	815	(21)	1,433
Korea	856	745	15	1,372
Indonesia	551	383	44	1,195
Taiwan	673	559	20	1,175
Thailand	323	417	(23)	727
Italy	458	419	9	622
Colombia	193	412	(53)	618
Top 10 importers	8,645	8,564	1	15,897
Total U.S. wheat export sales	13,990	12,905	8	23,821
% of projected exports	53%	49%		
change from prior week ²	506	328		
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	62%	66%		67%
USDA forecast, September 2020	26,567	26,294	1	

¹Based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for 2018/19; Marketing year (MY) = Jun 1 - May 31.

²Cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), FAS weekly export sales report, or export sales query. The total commitments change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from the previous week's outstanding and/or accumulated sales.

³FAS marketing year final reports (carryover plus accumulated export); yr. = year; avg. = average.

Note: A red number in parentheses indicates a negative number.

Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 16

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

Port regions	For the week ending 10/01/20	Previous week*	Current week as % of previous	2020 YTD*	2019 YTD*	2020 YTD as % of 2019 YTD	Last 4-weeks as % of:		2019 total*
							Last year	Prior 3-yr. avg.	
Pacific Northwest									
Wheat	406	363	112	12,678	10,536	120	120	121	13,961
Corn	95	243	39	8,255	6,918	119	n/a	128	7,047
Soybeans	640	348	184	5,002	7,655	65	321	540	11,969
Total	1,140	954	119	25,934	25,109	103	219	180	32,977
Mississippi Gulf									
Wheat	54	118	46	3,062	3,828	80	137	134	4,448
Corn	599	366	164	21,826	17,017	128	220	106	20,763
Soybeans	812	821	99	19,936	20,396	98	135	133	31,398
Total	1,465	1,306	112	44,825	41,241	109	153	123	56,609
Texas Gulf									
Wheat	167	72	232	3,519	5,206	68	166	155	6,009
Corn	0	0	n/a	600	577	104	135	87	640
Soybeans	84	0	n/a	483	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	2
Total	251	72	349	4,601	5,784	80	231	201	6,650
Interior									
Wheat	20	54	36	1,677	1,517	111	81	88	1,987
Corn	146	203	72	6,500	5,889	110	107	84	7,857
Soybeans	141	155	91	4,861	5,307	92	90	119	7,043
Total	307	412	74	13,038	12,713	103	96	96	16,887
Great Lakes									
Wheat	31	10	314	659	868	76	81	103	1,339
Corn	0	0	n/a	54	0	n/a	n/a	0	11
Soybeans	22	29	77	407	473	86	518	220	493
Total	54	39	138	1,120	1,341	84	146	131	1,844
Atlantic									
Wheat	0	0	n/a	26	37	71	33	38	37
Corn	9	0	n/a	24	98	25	484	100	99
Soybeans	3	11	29	570	995	57	624	131	1,353
Total	12	11	107	620	1,130	55	518	122	1,489
U.S. total from ports*									
Wheat	678	618	110	21,621	21,992	98	122	124	27,781
Corn	849	813	104	37,258	30,498	122	219	104	36,417
Soybeans	1,702	1,365	125	31,260	34,828	90	162	170	52,258
Total	3,229	2,795	116	90,138	87,318	103	162	136	116,457

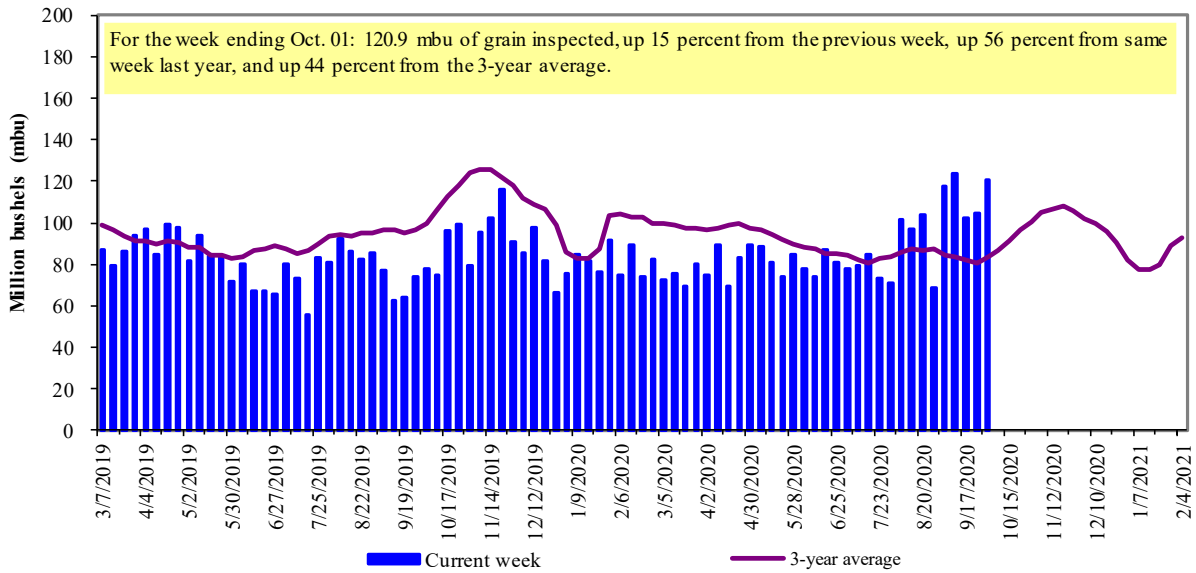
*Data includes revisions from prior weeks; some regional totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service; YTD= year-to-date; n/a = not applicable or no change.

The United States exports approximately one-quarter of the grain it produces. On average, this includes nearly 45 percent of U.S.-grown wheat, 50 percent of U.S.-grown soybeans, and 20 percent of the U.S.-grown corn. Approximately 55 percent of the U.S. export grain shipments departed through the U.S. Gulf region in 2019.

Figure 14

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

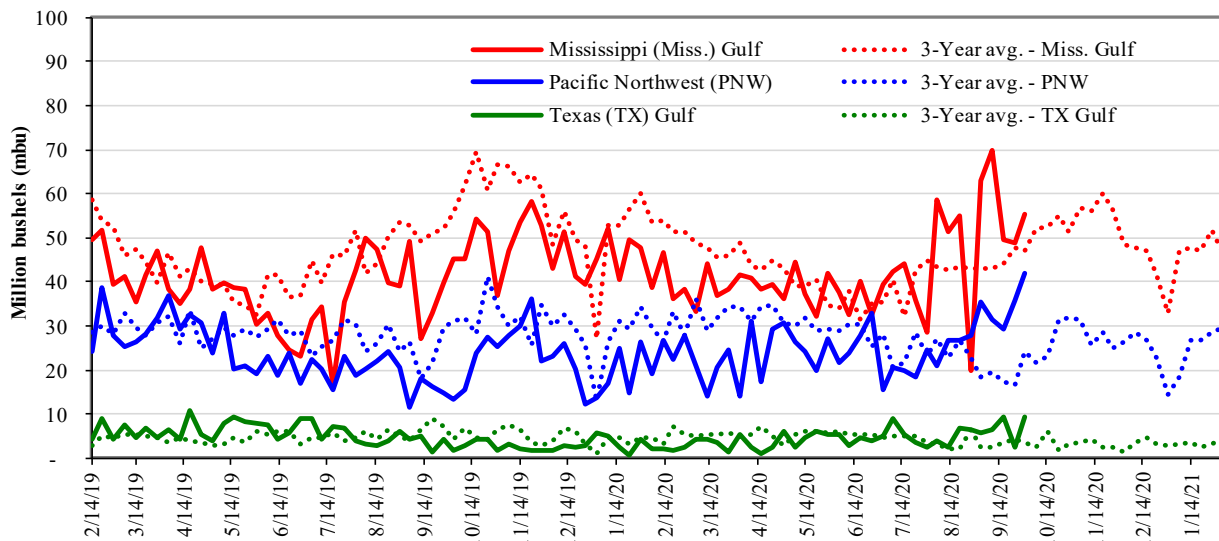


Note: 3-year average consists of 4-week running average.

Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Figure 15

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



Week ending 10/01/20 inspections (mbu):	Percent change from:	MS Gulf	TX Gulf	U.S. Gulf	PNW
MS Gulf: 55.4	Last wk:	up 13	up 249	up 25	up 18
PNW: 42.1	Last Year (same wk):	up 22	up 487	up 38	up 215
TX Gulf: 9.2	3-yr avg.(4-wk. mov. Avg):	up 22	up 166	up 32	up 117

Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Ocean Transportation

Table 17

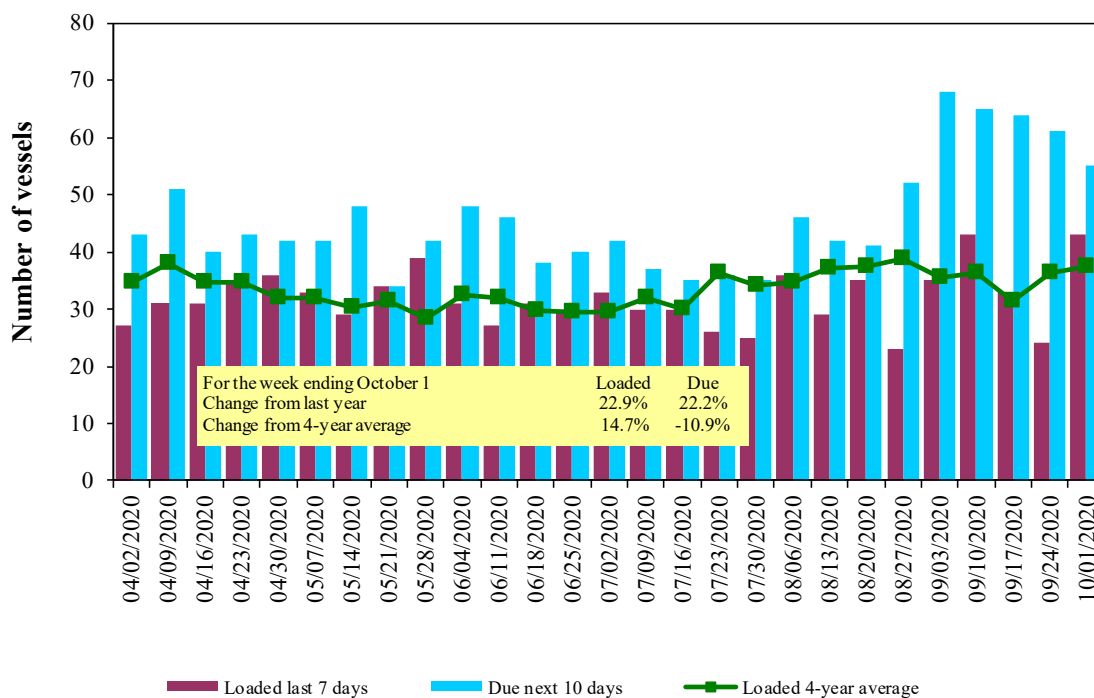
Weekly port region grain ocean vessel activity (number of vessels)

Date	Gulf			Pacific Northwest
	In port	Loaded 7-days	Due next 10-days	In port
10/1/2020	53	43	55	15
9/24/2020	60	24	61	16
2019 range	(26...61)	(18...44)	(33...69)	(8...33)
2019 average	40	31	49	17

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 16

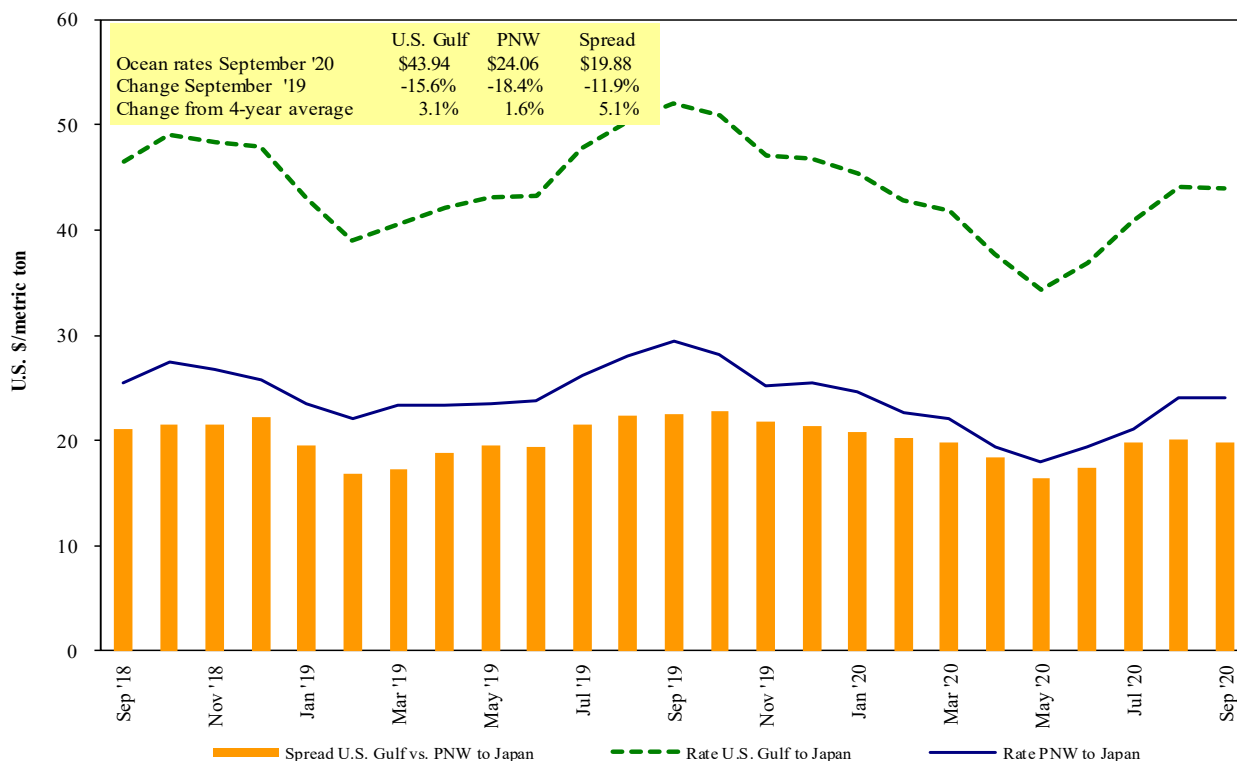
U.S. Gulf¹ vessel loading activity



¹U.S. Gulf includes Mississippi, Texas, and East Gulf.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 17

Grain vessel rates, U.S. to Japan



Note: PNW = Pacific Northwest.

Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting.

Table 18

Ocean freight rates for selected shipments, week ending 10/03/2020

Export region	Import region	Grain types	Loading date	Volume loads (metric tons)	Freight rate (US\$/metric ton)
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy grain	Oct 16/25	66,000	41.75
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy grain	Aug 18/24	66,000	39.50
U.S. Gulf	Djibouti	Wheat	Oct 16/26	12,180	94.48*
U.S. Gulf	Djibouti	Wheat	Sep 18/28	15,810	54.86*
U.S. Gulf	Cameroon	Sorghum	Oct 10/20	8,580	68.50*
U.S. Gulf	Mozambique	Sorghum	Aug 10/20	30,780	41.35
U.S. Gulf	Pt Sudan	Sorghum	Jun 5/15	33,370	99.50
PNW	China	Soybeans	Sep 1/30	63,000	22.10 op 22.60
PNW	Indonesia	Soybean Meal	Nov 10/20	8,600	37.86*
PNW	Yemen	Wheat	Aug 4/14	15,000	42.95*
Vancouver	Japan	Wheat	Sep 15/30	20,000	24.30
Vancouver	Japan	Canola	Sep 15/30	30,000	24.30
Brazil	Japan	Corn	Sep 11/20	49,000	34.75
Brazil	Japan	Corn	Sep 1/10	60,000	34.00

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

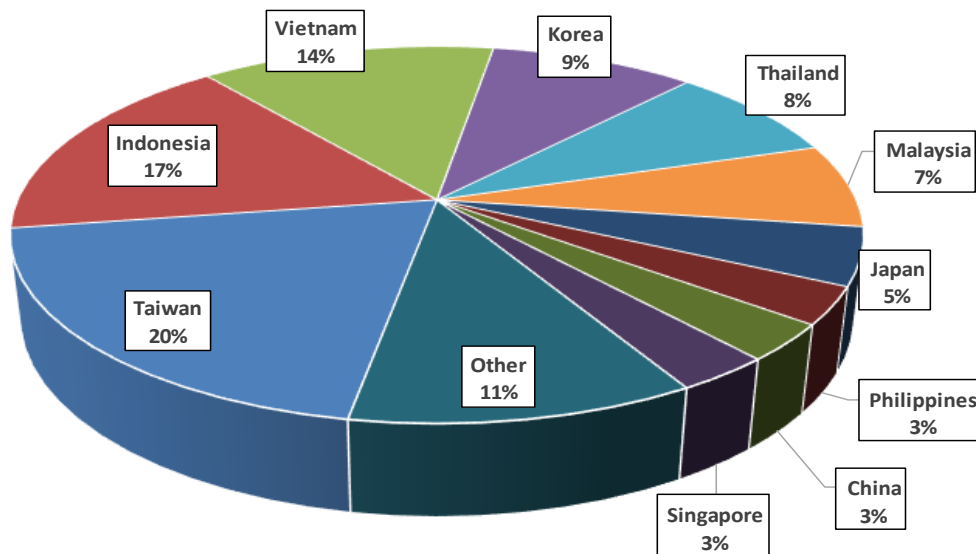
Note: Rates shown are per metric ton (2,204.62 lbs. = 1 metric ton), free on board (F.O.B), except where otherwise indicated;

op = option.

Source: Maritime Research, Inc.

In 2019, containers were used to transport 9 percent of total U.S. waterborne grain exports. Approximately 60 percent of U.S. waterborne grain exports in 2019 went to Asia, of which 14 percent were moved in containers. Approximately 94 percent of U.S. waterborne containerized grain exports were destined for Asia.

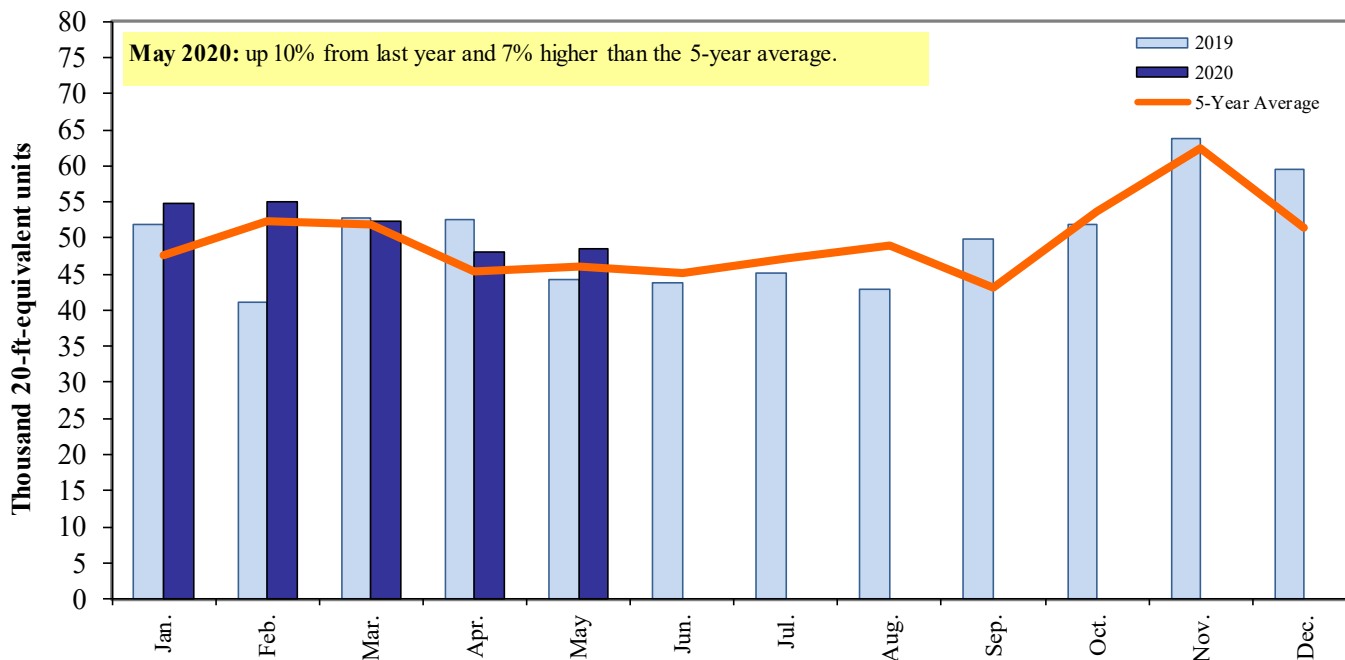
Figure 18
Top 10 destination markets for U.S. containerized grain exports, Jan-May 2020



Note: The following Harmonized Tariff Codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 1001, 100190, 1002, 1003, 100300, 1004, 100400, 1005, 100590, 1007, 100700, 1102, 110100, 230310, 110220, 110290, 1201, 120100, 230210, 230990, 230330, 120810, and 120190.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Transportation Services Division analysis of PIERS data.

Figure 19
Monthly shipments of containerized grain to Asia



Note: The following Harmonized Tariff Codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 100190, 100200, 100300, 100400, 100590, 100700, 110100, 110220, 110290, 1201, 120190, 120810, 230210, 230310, 230330, and 230990.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Transportation Services Division analysis of PIERS data.

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Ocean Transportation

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