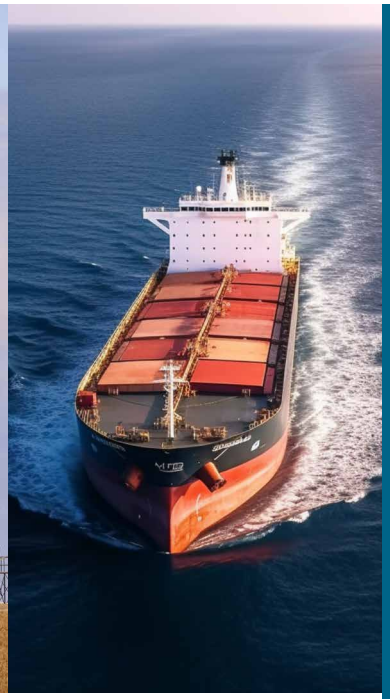
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Grain Transportation Report

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FRA's CRISI Grants To Fund Grain-Related Railroad Improvements. This week, as part of $2.3 billion in funding for 105 freight and passenger rail projects, the Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) **awarded** over $400 million to short line railroads that handle grain. The projects received grants through FRA's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program.

CRISI-recipient, agriculture-focused projects—in Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Washington—will collectively receive about $100 million to rehabilitate track to accommodate larger railcars (with 286,000-pound capacity). Also, the Twin Cities & Western Railroad will receive up to $22 million to procure 200 new grain cars and upgrade track segments to handle larger cars. Bottineau County in North Dakota will receive up to $691,000 to help develop a new rail-served grain elevator.

Beyond explicitly agriculture-focused projects, CRISI awards also support general freight rail improvements that benefit grain shippers. A full list of this year's recipients is available on FRA's **website**.

Weekly PNW Soybean Exports Reach Nearly 2-Year High. According to USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service, 682,779 metric tons of soybeans, loaded onto 10 ships, were inspected for export from Pacific Northwest (PNW) terminals and destined for China during the week ending October 15 (**GTR table 18**). This was the highest weekly PNW soybean-export total since November 2024.

Last year, because of trade negotiations between the United States and China, the first soybean shipment from the PNW to China did not load until December (**GTR, January 1, 2026**). In a typical year, U.S. soybean exports to China peak in October, when U.S. harvest supplies are priced competitively against South American alternatives.

Last week's PNW soybean inspections for China exceeded China-bound shipments from the U.S. Gulf, which totaled just under 600,000 metric tons across nine vessels. Because of congestion and transit restrictions at the Panama Canal, Gulf-origin soybean shipments to China are currently diverting around the southern tip of Africa—significantly increasing voyage distance and time. Typically, shipments from the PNW benefit from lower ocean freight rates and shorter transit times than shipments from the U.S. Gulf. However, right now, because of the Panama Canal disruptions, the PNW's advantages are greater than usual.

FMCSA Waives Hours-of-Service Rules for Hauling Fuel. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has temporarily **waived** standard hours-of-service rules for interstate drivers hauling gasoline and diesel until December 16. The action is intended to help meet rising seasonal fuel demand and help compensate for global supply issues.

The waiver allows longer driving windows—up to 16 hours in a 24-hour period—while still requiring minimum rest periods and valid driver credentials. Carriers with poor safety ratings or out-of-service orders are not eligible. To be eligible, drivers must carry the waiver, follow all other Federal safety regulations, and report crashes within 2 business days. Although States cannot enforce intrastate rules that conflict with interstate ones, States may adopt similar intrastate relief.

USDA/FGIS Launches Export Inspection Dashboard. USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) has launched a new **Export Inspection and Weighing Dashboard**—a free, publicly available, interactive tool that modernizes how U.S. export grain inspection data is shared.

The dashboard complements existing, static weekly reports with easy-to-use displays that allow users to explore inspection volumes by year, month, grain type, destination, region, and trend. The visualization also provides year-to-year comparisons, multi-year trends, and a global view of U.S. grain export activity.

The new modernized tool supports better decisionmaking for producers, grain handlers, exporters, and industry partners and aligns with USDA's broader transparency and data-modernization goals.

*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 October 15, **unshipped balances** of corn, soybeans, and wheat for marketing year (MY) 2026/27 totaled 35.03 million metric tons (mmt), up 5 percent from the week ending October 8 and up 3 percent from the same time last year.

Net **corn export sales** for MY 2026/27 were 1.53 mmt, up 36 percent from the week ending October 8. Net **soybean export sales** were 2.84 mmt, up significantly from the week ending October 8. Net **wheat export sales** were 0.24 mmt, down 25 percent from the week ending October 8.

Rail

U.S. Class I railroads originated 29,067 **grain carloads** during the week ending October 10. This was a 9-percent increase from the previous week, 2 percent more than last year, and 3 percent more than the 3-year average.

Average October **shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers** (per car) were $125 above tariff for the week ending October 15. This was $363 less than last week and $550 lower than this week last year. Average non-shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers per car were at tariff. This was unchanged from last week and unchanged from this week last year.

Barge

For the week ending October 17, **barged grain movements** totaled 522,313 tons. This was 31 percent more than the previous week and 7 percent less than the same week last year.

For the week ending October 17, 344 **barges moved down river**, 91 more than the previous week. There were 873 grain barges unloaded in the New Orleans region, 16 percent more than the previous week.

Ocean

For the week ending October 15, 31 **oceangoing grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf—3 percent more than the same period last year. Within the next 10 days (starting October 16), 45 vessels were expected to be loaded—4 fewer than the same period last year.

As of October 15, the rate for shipping a metric ton (mt) of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was $76.75, up 1 percent from the previous week. The rate from the Pacific Northwest to Japan was $37.50 per mt, unchanged from the previous week.

Fuel

For the week ending October 19, the **U.S. average diesel fuel price** increased 9.7 cents from the previous week to $6.276 per gallon, 265.6 cents above the same week last year.

Grain Transportation Update: High Freight Rates To Start MY 2026/27

As in second quarter (**Grain Transportation Report (GTR), July 30, 2026**), third quarter 2026 volumes remained high across rail, barge, and ocean shipping, supported by last year's record-large harvest and strong exports that continued to drive robust movements throughout the late summer and early fall. Though not expected to match last year's exceptionally large crop, this year's fall harvest is still well above average—portending another season of strong grain transportation demand.[1] As the new crop enters the transportation system this fall, shippers will face higher freight rates, across modes, reflecting sustained increases in fuel costs.

Record Soybean Production To Transport in MY 2026/27

USDA/National Agricultural Statistics Service's October **Crop Production report** forecasts farmers will harvest 16.03 billion bushels (bbu) of corn and 4.56 bbu of soybeans in marketing year (MY) 2026/27—up 261 million bushels (mbu) (combined) from last month's forecast (**GTR, October 15, 2026, fifth highlight**). If realized, the corn crop would be the second largest on record, and the soybean crop would set a new record high.

Even before this year's harvest began, grain inventories were high. As of September 1, storage held 4.49 bbu of grain, up 10 percent from average (**GTR, October 8, 2026**).[2] Combined, fall grain supplies—i.e., September 1 grain stocks, plus new production of corn, soybeans, and sorghum—are expected to tally 25.38 bbu, which (if realized) would be 2 percent below last year, but 4 percent above average.

Compared to average, States with the largest increases in fall grain supplies include Iowa, +290 mbu (+8 percent); Minnesota, +175 mbu (+8 percent); Ohio, +101 mbu (+10 percent); Illinois, +97 mbu (+3 percent); and Nebraska, +64 mbu (+3 percent).

Diesel Price Reaches New High; Oil Prices Stay Volatile

The availability of moderately priced petroleum-based products is crucial for grain transportation. Diesel fuel is used to power truck, rail, and barge movements, and heavy fuel oil is the primary bunker fuel for dry bulk ocean vessels. Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz—a key maritime chokepoint for oil—resulted in volatile oil prices this year.

Diesel Prices. In third quarter 2026, U.S. retail on highway diesel prices averaged $5.56 per gallon, up 21 cents from the previous quarter and up 180 cents from a year earlier (**GTR fig. 16**). After declining for much of the second quarter, the U.S. average diesel price rose for all but 3 weeks of the third quarter.[3] The price reached a new record high of $6.529 per gallon for the week ending September 21—nearly $2 higher than in early July. From the week ending September 21 to the week ending October 19, prices fell 25 cents, but stayed over $6 per gallon.

On October 5, in response to high diesel prices, the U.S. President signed an executive order temporarily allowing use of red-dyed diesel in highway vehicles and deferring Federal tax through year-end, without penalty (**GTR, first highlight, October 8, 2026**). Additionally, over a dozen States have waived or eased their State-level restrictions on dyed diesel for onroad use (**GTR, fourth highlight, October 1, 2026**).

The Energy Information Administration's (EIA) October **Short-Term Energy Outlook** projects Brent crude oil to average $105 per barrel in fourth quarter 2026—up $9 from the third quarter and up $14 from last month's outlook. The increases reflect supply risks following attacks on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline, tight global inventories, and constrained diesel supplies because refiners need sufficient crude oil as an input to meet diesel demand.

1 Unless otherwise noted, "average" (as referring to a historical average) specifically denotes the "prior 3-year average."
2 In this sum, "grain" includes new crop (MY2026/27) barley, oats, and wheat, as well as old crop (MY2025/26) corn, grain sorghum, and soybeans.
3 The "U.S. average diesel price" is an average, for a given week, of the diesel prices in all 50 U.S. States.

EIA expects diesel to average $5.81 per gallon in the fourth quarter—up 24 cents from the third quarter and up 26 cents from the September outlook driven by higher crude oil prices and rising profit margins of refining crude oil.

Heavy Fuel Oil Prices. Bunker fuel costs continued to rise. According to *Ship & Bunker*, the Global 20 ports average price per metric ton for very low sulfur fuel oil (VLSFO, IMO 2020 Grade 0.5 percent) was $862.73 in September—up 7 percent from $809.81 in August and up 65 percent from $523.12 in September 2025.

Rail Volumes Remain Elevated as Fuel Surcharges Raise Rail Rates

Ever since last year's harvest, quarterly rail carload volumes have sustained multi-year highs. Although railroads have recently adjusted their tariff rates for the new marketing year, the driving force in higher rail rates is the climbing fuel surcharge.

Grain Carloads Show Continued Strength. Third-quarter grain rail carloads totaled 382,846—up less than 1 percent from second quarter 2026 and up 32 percent from the third-quarter average (GTR fig. 3). Year to date, the largest growth continues to be among the U.S. operations of Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Kansas City. Because of this year's smaller corn crop (compared to last year), grain rail carloads in 2027 are likely to be lower than 2026 levels.

In recent weeks, rail service has been generally adequate, though most railroads have provided slower service than this time last year (GTR table 4a). For the week ending October 2, BNSF Railway (BNSF) delayed an average of 11 grain unit trains per day—the highest weekly total since April 2025. This number may reflect several derailments (e.g., near Minot, ND, and Des Moines, IA) and severe weather impacts (e.g., near Lincoln, NE) to the BNSF network.

Record Fuel Surcharge Drives Rise in Rail Rates. Reflecting rising diesel prices, railroad fuel surcharges increased in the third quarter, and are expected to move higher in the fourth quarter (GTR fig. 9). In July, Class I railroad fuel surcharges averaged $0.61 per mile (weighted by railroad, based on annual grain carloads)—an all-time record for the GTR fig. 9 data series.

Though still considerably above average, fuel surcharges dropped to $0.48 per mile in August and September. However, currently, October's fuel surcharge is at $0.59 per mile, and November's fuel surcharge will surpass the previous record ($0.61 per mile). Because most Class I railroads base their fuel surcharges on the diesel price from 2 months prior, November's fuel surcharge will reflect September's diesel price average ($6.291 per gallon).

Railroads' tariff changes for the new marketing year are shown in GTR table 6, GTR table 7, and GTR table 8. Tariff rates for wheat in the Southern Plains changed only slightly in June (GTR, May 14, 2026), while tariff rates for wheat in the Northern Plains rose in August (GTR, July 16, 2026). Most soybean rates rose in September—though BNSF made substantial rate cuts to the U.S.-Mexico border (GTR, August 20, 2026). Most corn rates increased in October—between $200 and $225 per car (GTR, September 17, 2026).

In the secondary market for shuttle trains, BNSF trips in October (purchased from May to September) averaged $1,100 per car—higher than last year, but similar to prior years. In the latest week, however, BNSF October shuttles have averaged just $150 per car—signaling that most shippers have their shuttle capacity covered in the near term. Union Pacific trips in October (purchased from June to September) averaged $440, though they likewise have fallen in the latest week to just $100 per car (GTR fig. 6).

Third-Quarter Barge Movements Highest in 6 Years Amid Elevated Rates

Barged grain movements on the Mississippi River System (MRS) were notably strong in the third quarter, despite a drop from second quarter. Meanwhile, third-quarter barge rates increased, in the face of rising diesel prices and growing operational and capacity constraints.

Barge Volumes. Third-quarter downbound grain shipments through the MRS locks totaled 7.8 million tons—down 4 percent from the second quarter of 2026, up 6 percent from

third quarter 2025, and up 32 percent from the third-quarter average. On October 17, year-to-date (YTD) barge movements totaled 22.7 million tons—down 9 percent from the same week last year and down 3 percent from average (GTR table 10).

Barge Rates. After a second-quarter drop, average monthly barge rates rose throughout the third quarter. Though barge rates typically rise in the third quarter because of harvest demand, this year's third-quarter spike in rates exceeded the typical seasonal rise: for the fourth year in a row, additional upward pressure on rates came from capacity and logistical issues related to low water on the Mississippi River.

Spot rates continued rising in August and September owing to high diesel prices and the lingering effects of operating restrictions imposed in late July. For example, third-quarter downbound barge spot rates from St. Louis, MO, averaged $25.67 per ton—up 50 percent from the second quarter, up 34 percent from last year, and up 30 percent from the third-quarter average.

For the week ending October 13, the St. Louis spot rate was $26.87 per ton—up 34 percent from last year and up 15 percent from average. Also, for the week ending October 13, the St. Louis 3-month-forward river rates averaged $21.63 per ton—about $5 higher than last year and more than $5 above average.

Dry Bulk Ocean Freight Rates and Vessel Loadings High

In third quarter 2026, average ocean freight rates for shipping bulk grain rose from the second quarter, third quarter 2025, and prior 4-year third-quarter average. At $72.76 per metric ton, the third-quarter rate for shipping grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was the highest quarterly average since second quarter 2022. While fluctuating throughout the year, ocean freight rates have been elevated since March. The current high ocean freight rates reflect strong bulk movements (including grain), geopolitical tensions, and higher bunker fuel prices. As of the week ending October 8, YTD vessel loadings in the U.S. Gulf reflected stronger export demand than the same week last year.

Latest Bulk Vessel Rates. For the week ending October 15, the rate from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was $76.75 per mt—54 percent above the first week of January and 35 percent above the same week last October. Also, for the week ending October 15, the rate from the Pacific Northwest (PNW) to Japan was $37.50 per mt—up 42 percent from the beginning of the year and up 26 percent from the same week last year. The rate from the U.S. Gulf to Europe was $22.25—down 1 percent from the beginning of the year and down 11 percent from the same week last year.

Factors That May Influence Rates. In September, the global dry bulk operating fleet capacity was estimated at 1,095.5 million deadweight tons (mdwt)—up 4 percent from a 1,056.4-mdwt capacity in September 2025 (*Shipping Insight*, Drewry Maritime Research, October 7, 2026). The current ample capacity may slow ocean rates' rise or even lower rates.

On the other hand, rates may rise if several other factors take shape. For one, China's resumed purchases of U.S. soybeans may continue to boost demand for Panamax vessels. Another possible rate-lifting factor would be the persistence of strong loading activity (especially during the harvest). Likewise, higher bunker fuel prices may continue to increase vessels' operating costs.

Finally, depending on the whims of El Niño weather, drought may force the Panama Canal Authority to reduce transits through the Canal—effectively, rerouting vessels around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, lengthening voyages, and increasing ton-miles. If the draft restrictions coincide with strong U.S. grain exports, the rate-elevating effect may be magnified.

U.S. Gulf Vessel Loading Activity. YTD vessel loading activity in the U.S. Gulf is up from last year (GTR fig. 19). As of the week ending October 15, a YTD weekly average of 29 oceangoing vessels had been loaded—compared to a weekly average of 28 vessels for the same period in 2025.

October *WASDE* Project Higher Corn and Soybean Exports and Lower Wheat Exports for MY 2026/27

The October ***World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report*** made the following adjustments to last month's MY 2026/27 export projections: a 0.64-mmt rise in corn exports, a 0.27-mmt rise in soybean exports, and 0.68-mmt drop in wheat exports. October's higher projections for corn and soybean exports are based on production estimates for those commodities that were revised up from September, while the October projection for MY 2026/27 wheat exports (the lowest since MY 1971/72) is based on a lower October wheat production estimate.

Domestic Use. At 439.2 mmt in MY 2026/27, forecasted domestic use of corn, soybeans, and wheat would be the second highest on record, 4 percent above average. This rise is driven by more domestic consumption of corn and soybeans, up 3 percent and 13 percent from average, respectively.

Exports. For the period from September 1 (when MY 2026/27 began) to October 15, total corn export commitments stood at 22.19 mmt, 34 percent behind the same time last year. Of total commitments, 12.6 mmt remained unshipped, 48 percent behind same time last year. The new corn crop's pace slightly lagged last year, as relatively high domestic U.S. prices influenced export demand. However, export demand for U.S. corn is expected to continue strong in MY 2026/27, reflecting a 3.2-mmt drop in estimated global corn production this month, while global domestic consumption remains projected at an all-time high.

In contrast, U.S. soybean exports are off to a strong start. For the week ending October 15, U.S. total soybean commitments were 26.2 mmt, 81 percent ahead of last year. Of total commitments, 19.1 mmt remained unshipped, more than double compared to the same time last year.

U.S. wheat exports are forecasted at a 3-year low, with domestic supplies limited by drought and the smallest planted area on record since 1919. Also, demand for U.S. exports is hampered by a lack of competitive pricing with large crops from other direct competitors such as Canada, Australia, and Argentina. Hard red winter wheat exports are particularly impacted: as of October 15, total commitments were down 63 percent from a year ago—the largest reduction for all the wheat classes. White wheat and durum were the only classes with total commitments up from a year ago.

Overall, U.S. wheat export sales appear to be somewhat slow, but stronger shipments later in the marketing year could emerge because of smaller global supplies, higher prices, and uncertainty surrounding shipments from Russia and Ukraine. For the week ending October 15, U.S. total wheat commitments were 10.7 mmt, 32 percent behind last year. Of total commitments, 3.3 mmt remained unshipped, 32 percent behind the same time last year.

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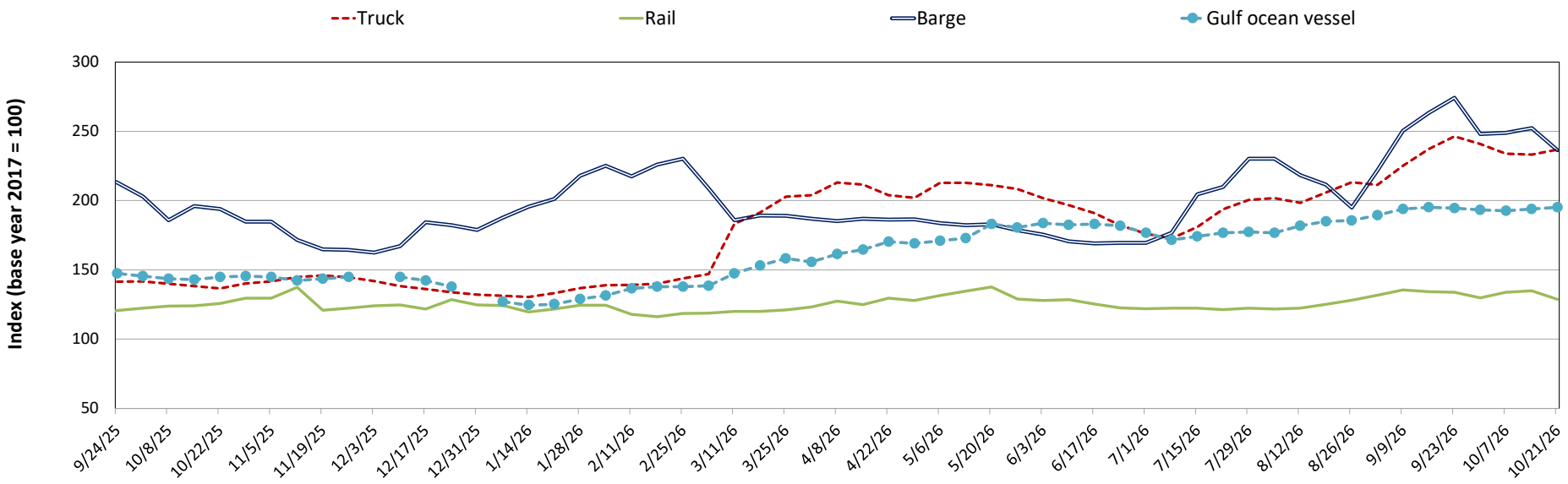
Grains are transported to the domestic and international markets via one or more of the following modes: truck, rail, barge, and oceangoing vessel. Monitoring the cost of transportation for each mode is vital to the marketing decision making process.

Table 1. Grain transport cost indicators

For the week ending:	Truck	Rail	Barge	Ocean	
				Gulf	Pacific
10/21/26	237	129	236	195	178
10/14/26	233	135	252	194	178
10/22/25	137	126	194	145	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.

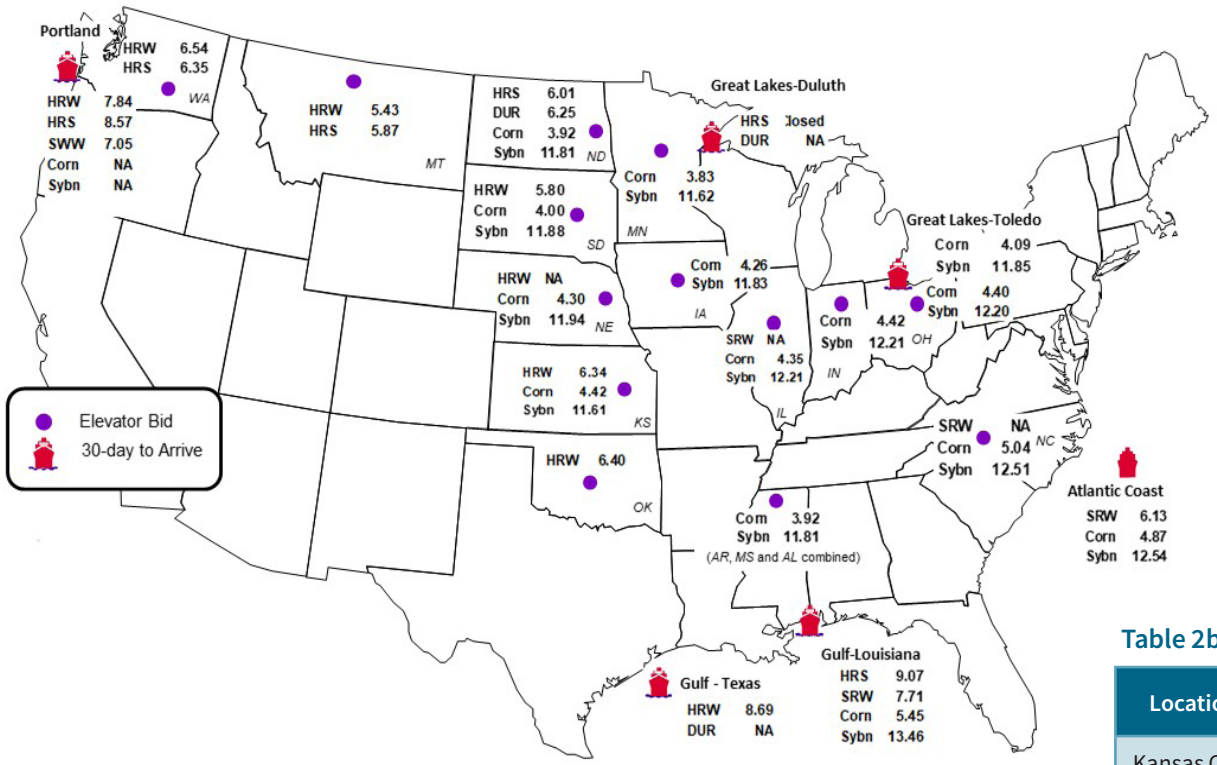
Figure 1. Grain transportation cost indicators as of week ending 10/21/26



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	10/16/2026	10/9/2026
Corn	IL–Gulf	-1.10	-1.06
Corn	NE–Gulf	-1.15	-1.13
Soybean	IA–Gulf	-1.63	-1.52
HRW	KS–Gulf	-2.35	-2.32
HRS	ND–Portland	-2.56	-2.46

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	10/16/2026	Week ago 10/09/2026	Year ago 10/17/2025
Kansas City	Wht	Dec	6.992	7.190	4.914
Minneapolis	Wht	Dec	6.700	6.953	5.485
Chicago	Wht	Dec	6.552	6.710	5.036
Chicago	Corn	Dec	4.668	4.798	4.224
Chicago	Sybn	Dec	12.686	12.918	10.368

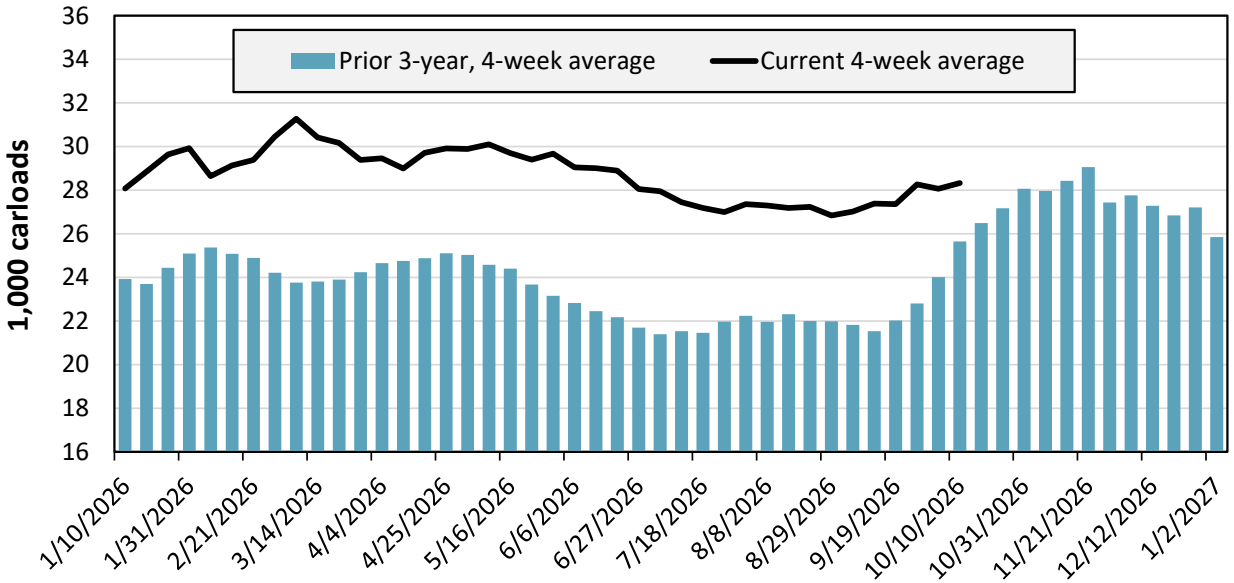
Sources: Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Group Grain and *Oilseed Futures Report*.

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

For the week ending: 10/10/2026	East		West		Central U.S.		U.S. total
	CSX	NS	BNSF	UP	CPKC	CN	
This week	2,086	2,360	12,846	6,292	4,255	1,228	29,067
This week last year	1,582	2,438	13,327	6,087	3,279	1,840	28,553
2026 YTD	60,336	100,854	511,399	266,072	146,014	67,448	1,152,123
2025 YTD	62,632	108,890	456,984	237,310	115,673	57,003	1,038,492
2026 YTD as % of 2025 YTD	96	93	112	112	126	118	111
Last 4 weeks as % of 2025	101	92	98	100	131	114	103
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr. avg.	100	94	105	112	141	120	110
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 October 10, grain carloads were up 1 percent from the previous week, up 3 percent from last year, and up 10 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: 10/9/2026		East		West		Central U.S.		U.S. Average
		CSX	NS	BNSF	UP	CN	CPKC	
Average grain unit train origin dwell times (hours)	This week	34.8	39.9	20.3	17.2	11.2	15.4	23.1
	Average over last 4 weeks	32.2	31.5	20.9	20.8	9.0	20.3	22.5
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	17.3	30.6	10.9	16.9	9.5	23.4	18.1
Average grain unit train speeds (miles per hour)	This week	21.8	18.4	24.6	23.1	23.0	20.8	22.0
	Average over last 4 weeks	21.9	18.8	24.1	23.0	22.5	19.1	21.6
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	22.9	19.3	24.7	23.3	24.5	16.7	21.9

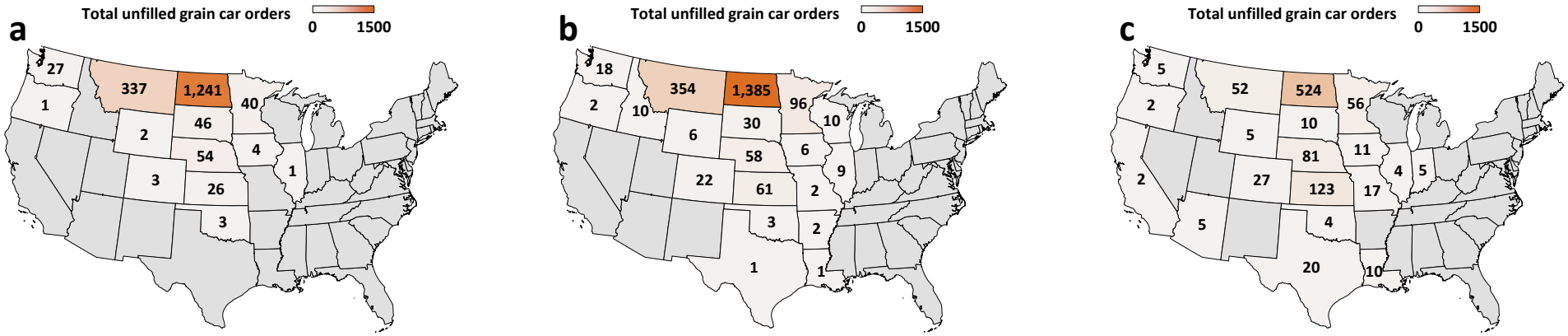
Note: NS = Norfolk Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City.
These service metrics are published weekly on the Surface Transportation Board's website and on AgTransport. For more information on each service metric, see 49 CFR § 1250.2.
Source: Surface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

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

For the week ending: 10/9/2026		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	49	21	326	74	7	125	601
	Average over last 4 weeks	46	26	315	61	4	153	605
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	14	4	230	61	4	231	544
Average number of loaded grain cars not moved in over 48 hours	This week	27	254	501	66	5	85	938
	Average over last 4 weeks	23	303	453	44	3	217	1,043
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	9	126	352	44	3	580	1,114
Average number of grain unit trains held	This week	0	0	4	4	0	3	12
	Average over last 4 weeks	0	0	6	4	0	5	15
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	0	0	3	4	0	6	13
Total unfilled manifest grain car orders	This week	0	0	910	24	0	851	1,785
	Average over last 4 weeks	0	1	840	79	0	1,187	2,107
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	6	0	363	135	0	483	988

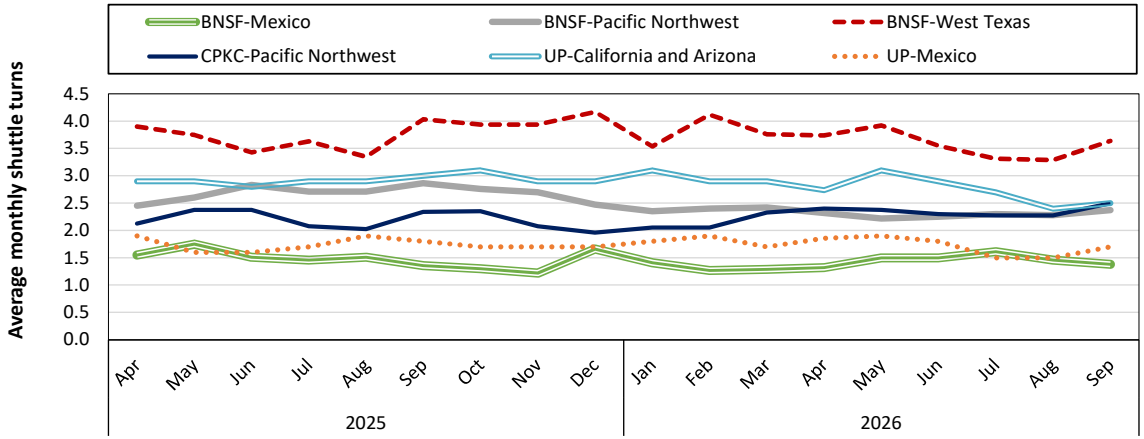
Note: NS = Norfolk Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City.
These service metrics are published weekly on the Surface Transportation Board's website and on AgTransport. For more information on each service metric, see 49 CFR § 1250.2.
Source: Surface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

Figure 4. Unfilled manifest grain car orders by State for the week ending 10/9/2026 (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

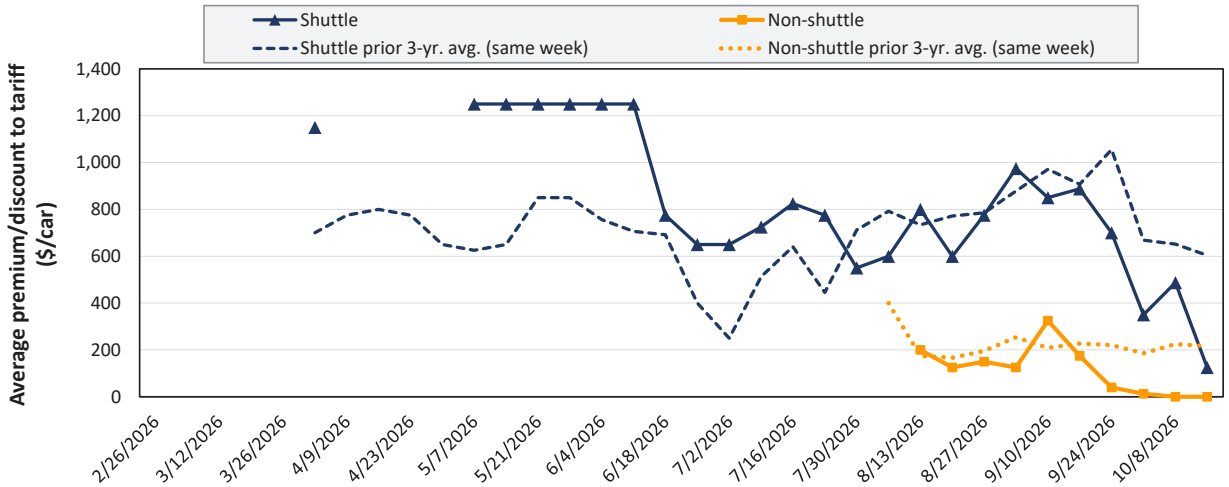


In September 2026, BNSF Railway's average monthly grain shuttle turns were 1.4 to Mexico, 2.4 to the Pacific Northwest, and 3.6 to West Texas. CPKC's shuttle turns averaged 2.5 to the Pacific Northwest. Union Pacific Railroad's shuttle turns averaged 2.5 to California and Arizona, and they averaged 1.7 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 October 2026



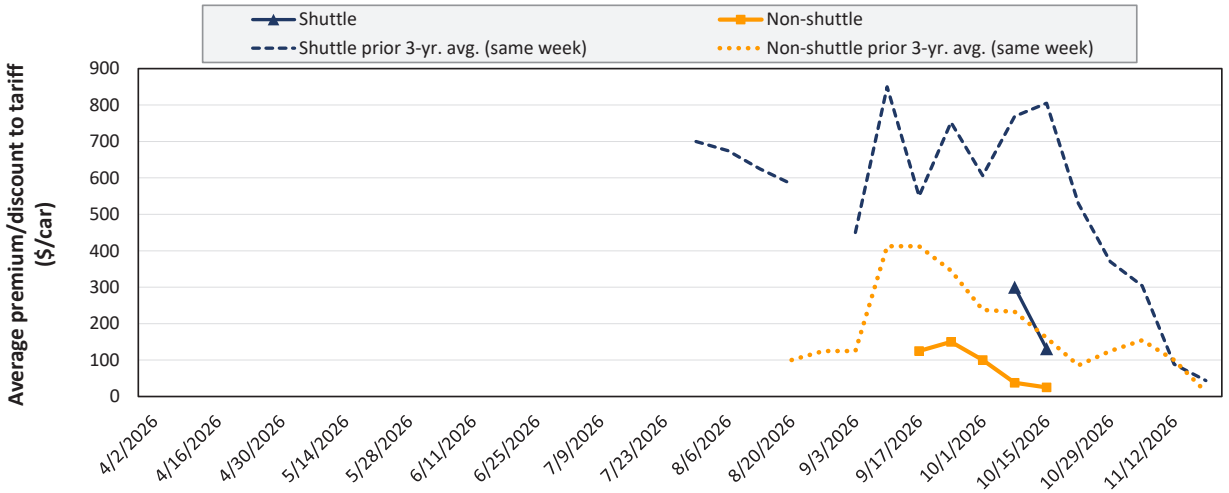
Average non-shuttle bids/offers are unchanged this week, and are $325 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers fell $363 this week and are $1,125 below the peak.

10/15/2026	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$0	n/a
Shuttle	$150	$100

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 November 2026



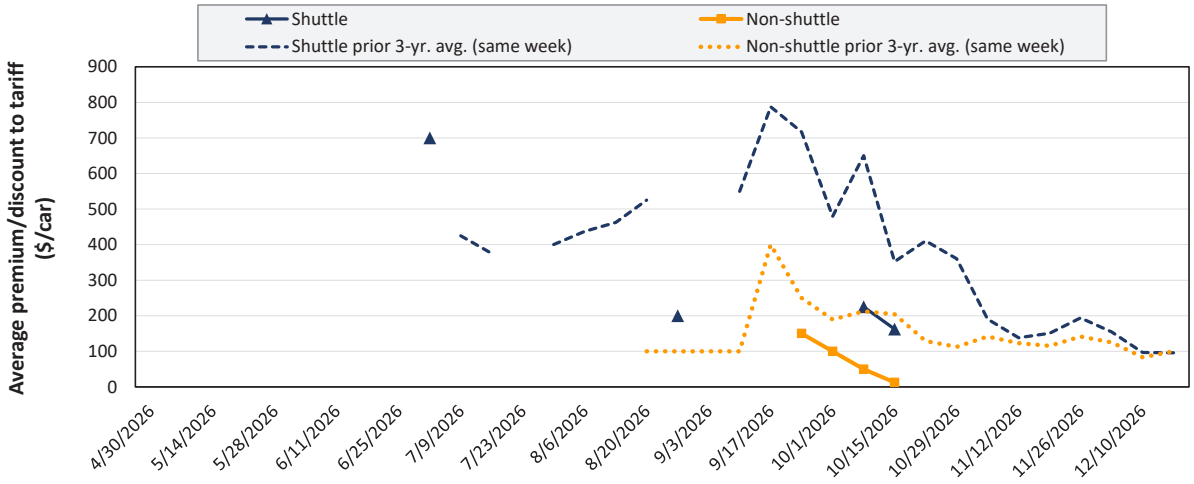
Average non-shuttle bids/offers fell $13 this week, and are $125 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers fell $169 this week and are $169 below the peak.

10/15/2026	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$25	$25
Shuttle	$63	$200

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 December 2026



Average non-shuttle bids/offers fell $38 this week, and are $138 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers fell $63 this week and are $538 below the peak.

10/15/2026	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$0	$25
Shuttle	$75	$250

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: 10/15/2026		Delivery period					
		Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Mar-27
Non-shuttle	BNSF	0	25	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	0	-25	-50	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	0	0	-50	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP	n/a	25	25	125	125	125
	Change from last week	n/a	0	-25	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	n/a	56	-75	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle	BNSF	150	63	75	550	550	550
	Change from last week	-425	n/a	-125	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	-700	-625	-413	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP	100	200	250	250	250	250
	Change from last week	-300	-100	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	-400	-113	100	n/a	n/a	n/a
	CPKC	n/a	200	100	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	n/a	-200	-300	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2025	n/a	0	0	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, October 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	$555	$6,539	$1.77	$64.94	9.9
	BNSF	Williston, ND	Superior, WI	Shuttle	$4,466	$278	$4,744	$1.28	$47.11	9.0
	CPKC	Westby, MT	St. Louis, MO	Unit	$6,013	$1,278	$7,291	$1.97	$72.41	16.0
	UP	Yuma, AZ	Houston, TX	Manifest	$6,025	$934	$6,959	$1.88	$69.10	7.4
Hard red spring (HRS)	BNSF	Alton (Hillsboro), ND	Chicago, IL	DET	$5,029	$322	$5,351	$1.45	$53.14	9.8
	BNSF	Alton (Hillsboro), ND	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$6,365	$774	$7,139	$1.93	$70.89	12.2
	BNSF	Alton (Hillsboro), ND	Superior, WI	Shuttle	$3,040	$149	$3,189	$0.86	$31.67	10.2
	BNSF	Alton (Hillsboro), ND	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$5,882	$805	$6,687	$1.81	$66.41	13.6
	BNSF	Bucyrus, ND	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$5,963	$681	$6,644	$1.80	$65.98	11.4
	BNSF	Macon, MT	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$5,562	$565	$6,127	$1.66	$60.85	11.1
	CPKC	Minot, ND	Kalama, WA	Unit	$5,448	$1,132	$6,580	$1.78	$65.34	14.6
	CPKC	Nekoma, ND	Chicago, IL	Manifest	$5,255	$680	$5,935	$1.60	$58.94	12.1
Hard red winter (HRW)	BNSF	Concordia, KS	Greenwood (Mendota), IL	Shuttle	$3,400	$293	$3,693	$1.00	$36.67	6.6
	BNSF	Enid, OK	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$3,400	$359	$3,759	$1.02	$37.33	2.8
	BNSF	Garden City, KS	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$5,800	$967	$6,767	$1.83	$67.20	13.0
	BNSF	Garden City, KS	San Bernardino, CA	DET	$5,600	$683	$6,283	$1.70	$62.39	7.6
	BNSF	Garden City, KS	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$4,200	$495	$4,695	$1.27	$46.62	9.5
	BNSF	Salina, KS	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$4,000	$511	$4,511	$1.22	$44.80	10.7
	BNSF	Wichita, KS	Birmingham, AL	Shuttle	$3,500	$421	$3,921	$1.06	$38.94	9.3
	BNSF	Wichita, KS	Chicago, IL	DET	$3,700	$287	$3,987	$1.08	$39.59	5.9
	BNSF	Wichita, KS	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Shuttle	$3,900	$458	$4,358	$1.18	$43.28	9.9
	UP	Byers, CO	Houston, TX	Shuttle	$4,525	$791	$5,316	$1.44	$52.79	8.3
	UP	Goodland, KS	Kansas City, MO	Manifest	$5,067	$296	$5,363	$1.45	$53.26	4.9
	UP	Medford, OK	Houston, TX	Shuttle	$3,775	$390	$4,165	$1.13	$41.36	5.1
	UP	Salina, KS	Houston, TX	Shuttle	$4,025	$520	$4,545	$1.23	$45.14	6.3
HRS/HRW	BNSF	Bowdle, SD	Chicago, IL	DET	$4,964	$347	$5,311	$1.44	$52.74	9.1
	BNSF	Conrad, MT	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$4,589	$439	$5,028	$1.36	$49.93	11.4
Soft white	BNSF	Templin (Ritzville), WA	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Shuttle	$2,082	$216	$2,298	$0.62	$22.82	11.3
All classes (To East Coast flour mills)	CSX	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	Manifest	$9,039	$349	$9,388	$2.54	$93.22	9.0
	CSX	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	Unit	$8,104	$349	$8,453	$2.28	$83.94	10.1
	CSX	Chicago, IL	Buffalo, NY	Manifest	$6,391	$223	$6,614	$1.79	$65.68	8.4
	CSX	Chicago, IL	Indiantown, FL	Manifest	$9,261	$595	$9,856	$2.66	$97.87	11.6

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, October 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	$5,800	$501	$6,301	$1.59	$62.57	10.4
	BNSF	Clarkfield, MN	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$5,670	$861	$6,531	$1.65	$64.86	15.8
	BNSF	Edison, NE	Hanford, CA	Railroad	$5,660	$830	$6,490	$1.64	$64.45	15.1
	BNSF	Edison, NE	Hereford, TX	Railroad	$4,700	$354	$5,054	$1.27	$50.19	10.5
	BNSF	Edison, NE	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$5,550	$951	$6,501	$1.64	$64.56	17.7
	BNSF	Greenwood (Mendota), IL	Hereford, TX	Railroad	$4,620	$423	$5,043	$1.27	$50.08	7.0
	BNSF	Phelps (Rock Port), MO	Clovis, NM	Railroad	$4,460	$346	$4,806	$1.21	$47.72	10.8
	BNSF	Phelps (Rock Port), MO	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Railroad	$4,200	$532	$4,732	$1.19	$46.99	15.6
	BNSF	Selby, SD	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$5,630	$749	$6,379	$1.61	$63.35	14.5
	BNSF	St. Cloud, MN	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$5,630	$849	$6,479	$1.63	$64.34	15.8
	CN	Gibson City, IL	Reserve, LA	Private	$2,631	$718	$3,349	$0.84	$33.25	13.2
	CN	Gibson City, IL	Reserve, LA	Railroad	$3,011	$718	$3,729	$0.94	$37.03	11.7
	CPKC	Delhi, LA	Morton, MS	Railroad	$1,412	$100	$1,512	$0.38	$15.01	8.7
	CPKC	Enderlin, ND	Kalama, WA	Railroad	$5,272	$1,302	$6,574	$1.66	$65.28	18.3
	CPKC	Glenwood, MN	Boardman, OR	Railroad	$5,513	$1,253	$6,766	$1.71	$67.19	12.7
	CSX	Haw Creek (Ladoga), IN	Ozark, AL	Railroad	$6,600	$304	$6,904	$1.74	$68.56	10.6
	CSX	Marysville, OH	Rose Hill, NC	Railroad	$6,766	$336	$7,102	$1.79	$70.52	11.3
	CSX	Olney, IL	Fairmount, GA	Railroad	$5,191	$215	$5,406	$1.36	$53.68	10.5
	UP	Allen Station (San Jose), IL	Pittsburg, TX	Railroad	$4,160	$470	$4,630	$1.17	$45.98	11.2
	UP	Frankfort, KS	Calipatria, CA	Railroad	$6,080	$1,069	$7,149	$1.80	$70.99	12.2
	UP	Mead, NE	Keyes, CA	Railroad	$6,240	$1,181	$7,421	$1.87	$73.70	12.6
	UP	Nebraska City, NE	Amarillo, TX	Railroad	$5,080	$486	$5,566	$1.40	$55.27	9.3
	UP	Sloan, IA	Burley, ID	Railroad	$5,760	$800	$6,560	$1.65	$65.14	10.7
	UP	Sterling, IL	Nashville, AR	Railroad	$4,300	$492	$4,792	$1.21	$47.58	11.1
Soybeans	BNSF	Argyle, MN	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$6,255	$786	$7,041	$1.90	$69.92	12.0
	BNSF	Argyle, MN	Texas Gulf (Houston, TX)	Railroad	$5,185	$748	$5,933	$1.60	$58.92	10.9
	BNSF	Casselton, ND	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$6,205	$761	$6,966	$1.88	$69.18	11.8
	BNSF	Casselton, ND	St. Louis, MO	Railroad	$3,400	$400	$3,800	$1.03	$37.73	9.0
	BNSF	Mitchell, SD	PNW (Seattle, WA)	Railroad	$6,305	$842	$7,147	$1.93	$70.97	12.6
	CN	Gibson City, IL	Reserve, LA	Private	$2,631	$718	$3,349	$0.91	$33.25	13.2
	CN	Gibson City, IL	Reserve, LA	Railroad	$3,011	$718	$3,729	$1.01	$37.03	11.7
	CPKC	Enderlin, ND	Kalama, WA	Railroad	$5,985	$1,302	$7,287	$1.97	$72.36	15.8
	CPKC	Enderlin, ND	East St. Louis, IL	Railroad	$3,726	$984	$4,710	$1.27	$46.77	20.3
	CSX	Casey, IL	Mobile, AL	Private	$3,775	$335	$4,110	$1.11	$40.81	12.7
	CSX	Marion, OH	Chesapeake, VA	Private	$3,327	$327	$3,654	$0.99	$36.28	13.7
	UP	Canton, KS	Houston, TX	Railroad	$3,875	$508	$4,383	$1.18	$43.52	12.5
	UP	Cozad, NE	Kalama, WA	Railroad	$5,365	$1,062	$6,427	$1.74	$63.82	13.6
	UP	Cozad, NE	Houston, TX	Railroad	$4,235	$733	$4,968	$1.34	$49.34	13.8
	UP	Sloan, IA	Ama, LA	Railroad	$4,315	$837	$5,152	$1.39	$51.16	14.6

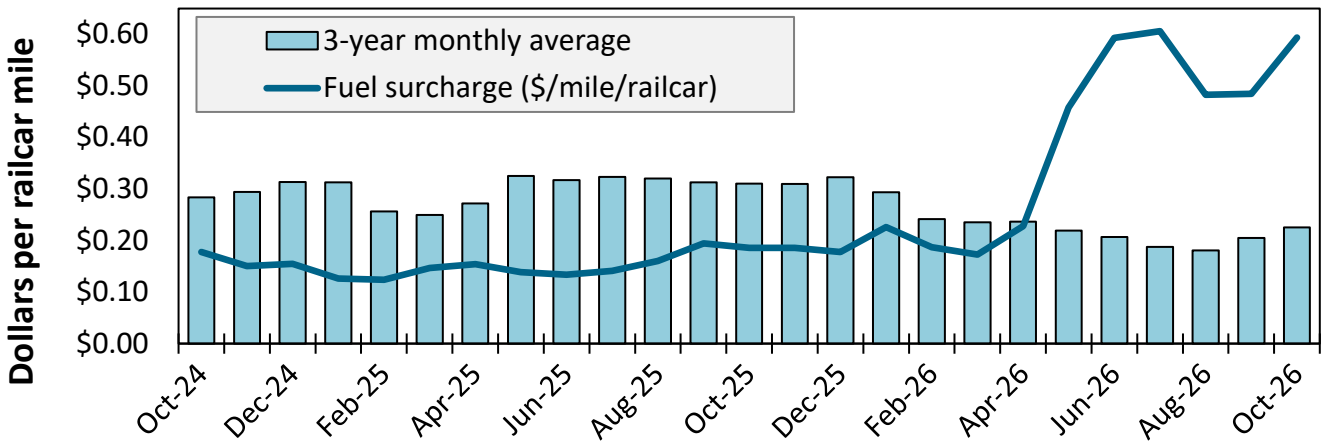
Note: Shuttle/unit trains are composed of 90+ grain cars that travel from a single origin to a single destination. All rates are for large covered hoppers (C-114), which each carry 111 short tons (100.7 metric tons). A bushel of corn weighs 56 pounds, and a bushel of soybeans weighs 60 pounds. Percentage 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, October 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	$4,560	$577	$5,137	$1.28	$50.56	7.7
	BNSF	Superior, NE	El Paso, TX	Shuttle	$4,740	$454	$5,194	$1.30	$51.12	10.0
	CPKC	Atchison, KS	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,080	$1,079	$6,159	$1.54	$60.62	9.8
	CPKC	Council Bluffs, IA	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,750	$1,194	$6,944	$1.74	$68.34	13.2
	CPKC	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,005	$1,031	$6,036	$1.51	$59.41	9.6
	CPKC	Marshall, MO	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,225	$1,094	$6,319	$1.58	$62.19	10.4
	UP	Pontiac, IL	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$4,760	$868	$5,628	$1.41	$55.39	13.6
	UP	Sterling, IL	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$4,880	$902	$5,782	$1.45	$56.91	13.5
Soybeans	BNSF	Brunswick, MO	El Paso, TX	Shuttle	$3,585	$490	$4,075	$1.09	$40.11	-8.1
	BNSF	Hardin, MO	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$3,585	$488	$4,073	$1.09	$40.09	-8.1
	CPKC	Atchison, KS	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,080	$1,079	$6,159	$1.65	$60.62	9.8
	CPKC	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,005	$1,031	$6,036	$1.62	$59.41	9.6
	UP	Grand Island, NE	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$5,175	$826	$6,001	$1.61	$59.06	12.1
	UP	Roelyn, IA	Eagle Pass, TX	Shuttle	$5,260	$866	$6,126	$1.64	$60.29	12.3
Wheat	BNSF	FT Worth, TX	El Paso, TX	DET	$3,100	$353	$3,453	$0.92	$33.98	12.1
	BNSF	FT Worth, TX	El Paso, TX	Shuttle	$2,600	$353	$2,953	$0.79	$29.06	2.6
	CPKC	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	Non-shuttle	$5,005	$1,031	$6,036	$1.62	$59.41	9.6
	UP	Great Bend, KS	Laredo, TX	Shuttle	$4,325	$620	$4,945	$1.32	$48.67	6.9
	UP	Wichita, KS	Laredo, TX	Shuttle	$4,065	$546	$4,611	$1.24	$45.38	6.5

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).

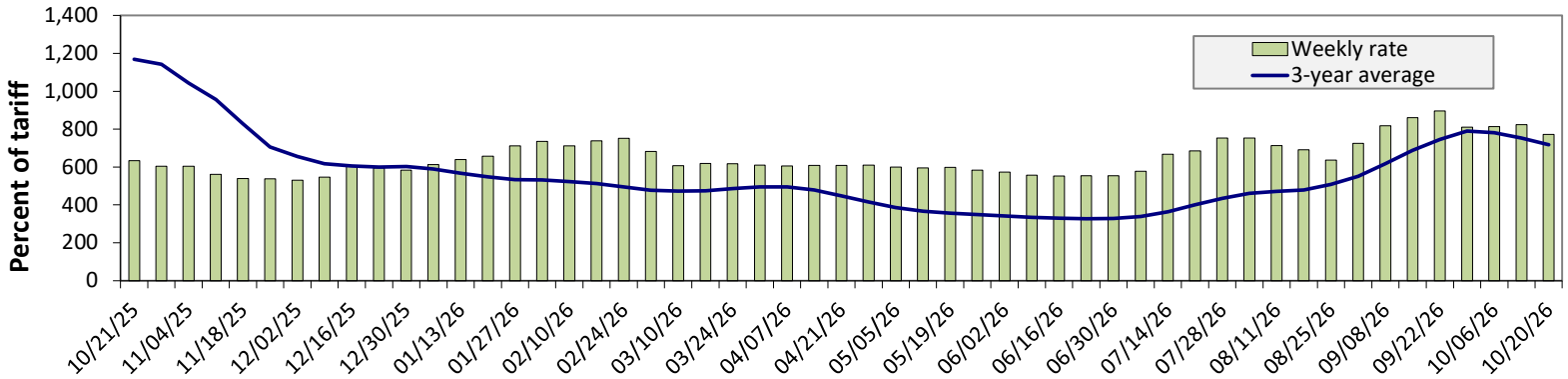
Figure 9. Railroad fuel surcharges, North American weighted average



October 2026: $0.59/mile, up 11 cents from last month's surcharge of $0.48/mile; up 40 cents from the October 2025 surcharge of $0.19/mile; and up 36 cents from the October prior 3-year average of $0.23/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 October 20: 6 percent lower than the previous week; 22 percent higher than last year; and 8 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

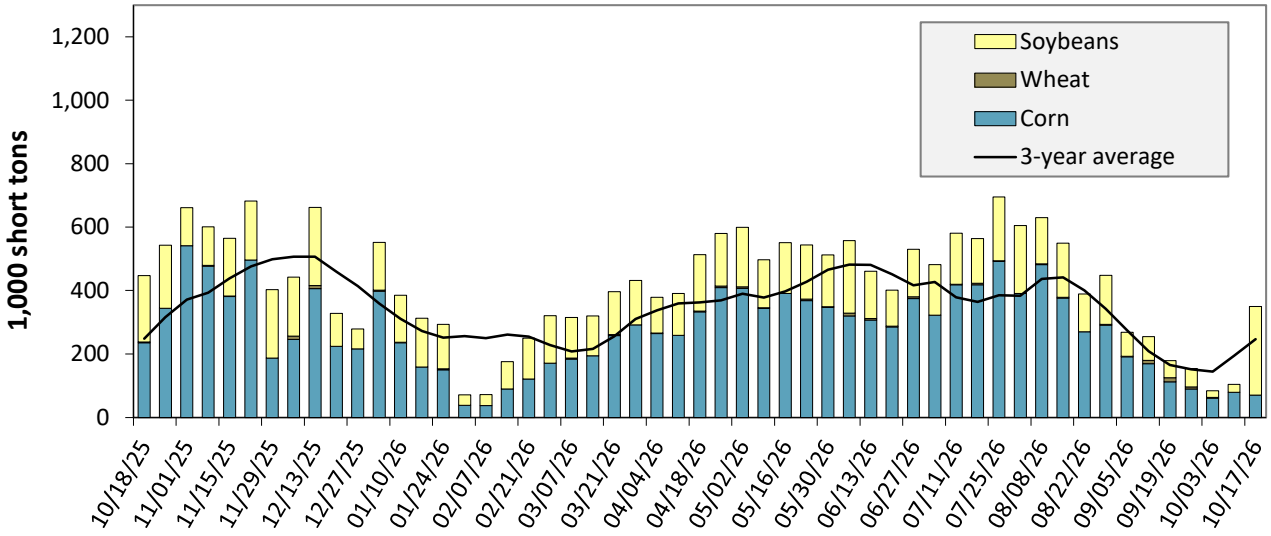
Measure	Date	Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Illinois River	St. Louis	Ohio River	Cairo-Memphis
Rate	10/20/2026	800	786	773	592	725	494
	10/13/2026	852	839	825	673	794	567
$/ton	10/20/2026	49.52	41.82	35.87	23.62	34.00	15.51
	10/13/2026	52.74	44.63	38.28	26.85	37.24	17.80
Measure	**Time Period**	**Twin Cities**	**Mid-Mississippi**	**Illinois River**	**St. Louis**	**Ohio River**	**Cairo-Memphis**
Current week % change from the same week	Last year	37	29	22	20	45	11
	3-year avg.	17	10	8	-9	5	-17
Rate	November	754	729	672	561	641	454
	January	n/a	n/a	640	532	588	456

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 October 17: 22 percent lower than last year and 42 percent higher than the 3-year average.

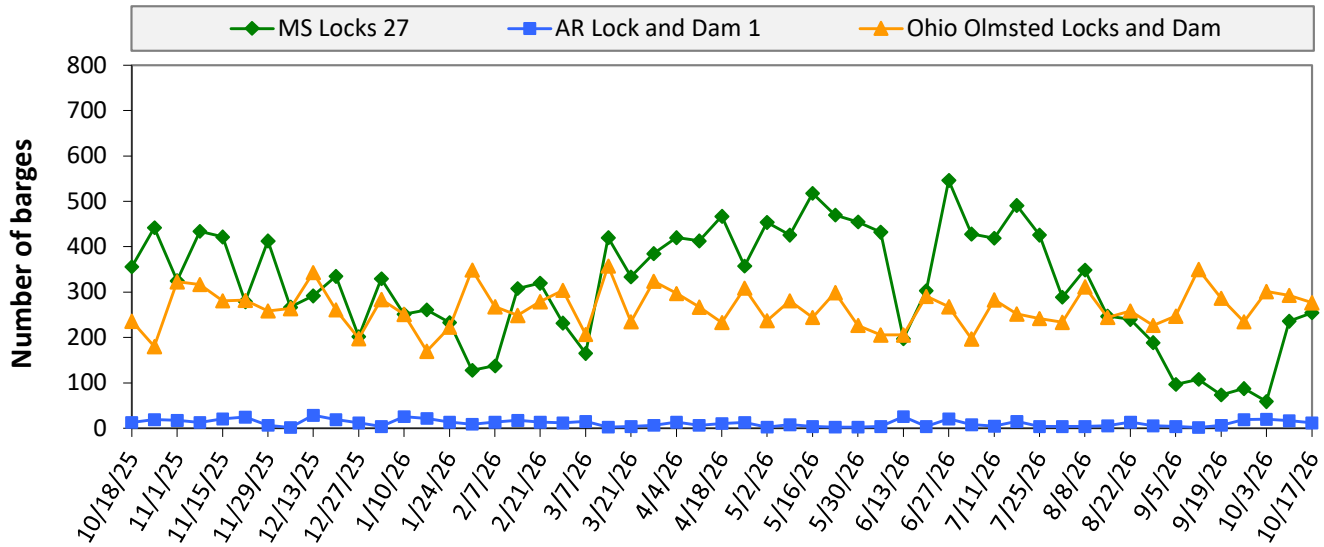
Note: The 3-year average is a 4-week moving average.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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

For the week ending 10/17/2026	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River (Rock Island, IL (L15))	20	0	193	0	213
Mississippi River (Winfield, MO (L25))	39	0	201	0	240
Mississippi River (Alton, IL (L26))	72	0	312	0	384
Mississippi River (Granite City, IL (L27))	70	0	280	0	350
Illinois River (La Grange)	17	0	101	0	118
Ohio River (Olmsted)	71	0	92	0	163
Arkansas River (L1)	0	0	10	0	10
Weekly total - 2026	141	0	381	0	522
Weekly total - 2025	288	7	268	0	563
2026 YTD	13,604	722	8,324	87	22,737
2025 YTD	15,308	1,107	8,429	144	24,987
2026 as % of 2025 YTD	89	65	99	61	91
Last 4 weeks as % of 2025	70	28	135	-	96
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.

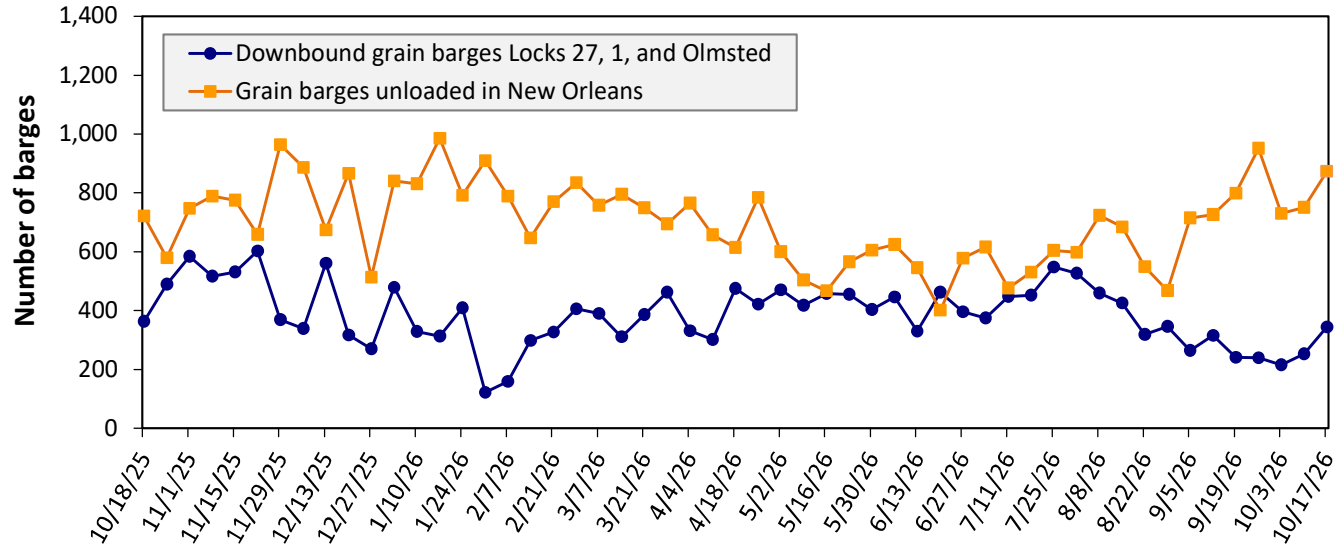
Figure 13. Upbound empty barges transiting Mississippi River Locks 27, Arkansas River Lock and Dam 1, and Ohio River Olmsted Locks and Dam



Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

For the week ending October 17: 544 barges transited the locks, 2 barges fewer than the previous week, and 17 percent higher than the 3-year average.

Figure 14. 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.

For the week ending October 17: 344 barges moved down river, 91 more than the previous week; 873 grain barges unloaded in the New Orleans Region, 16 percent more than the previous week.

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

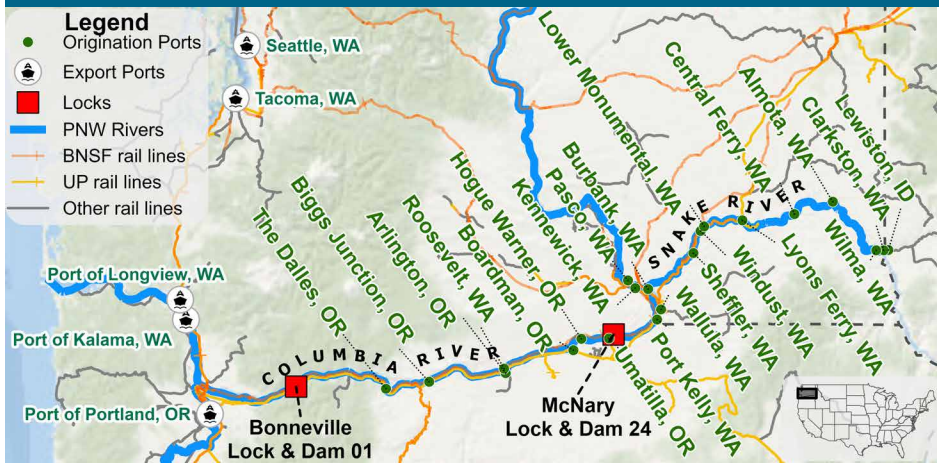
Note: Destination is Portland, OR, or Vancouver, WA; ton = 2,000 pounds; n/a = data not available.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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

September, 2026	Wheat	Other	Total
Snake River (McNary Lock and Dam (L24))	296	0	296
Columbia River (Bonneville Lock and Dam (L1))	371	0	371
Monthly total 2025 (L1)	365	0	365
Monthly total 2025(L24)	328	0	328
2026 YTD(L1)	2,705	0	2,705
2026 YTD(L24)	2,193	0	2,193
2025 YTD(L1)	2,994	0	2,994
2025 YTD(L24)	2,625	0	2,625

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.

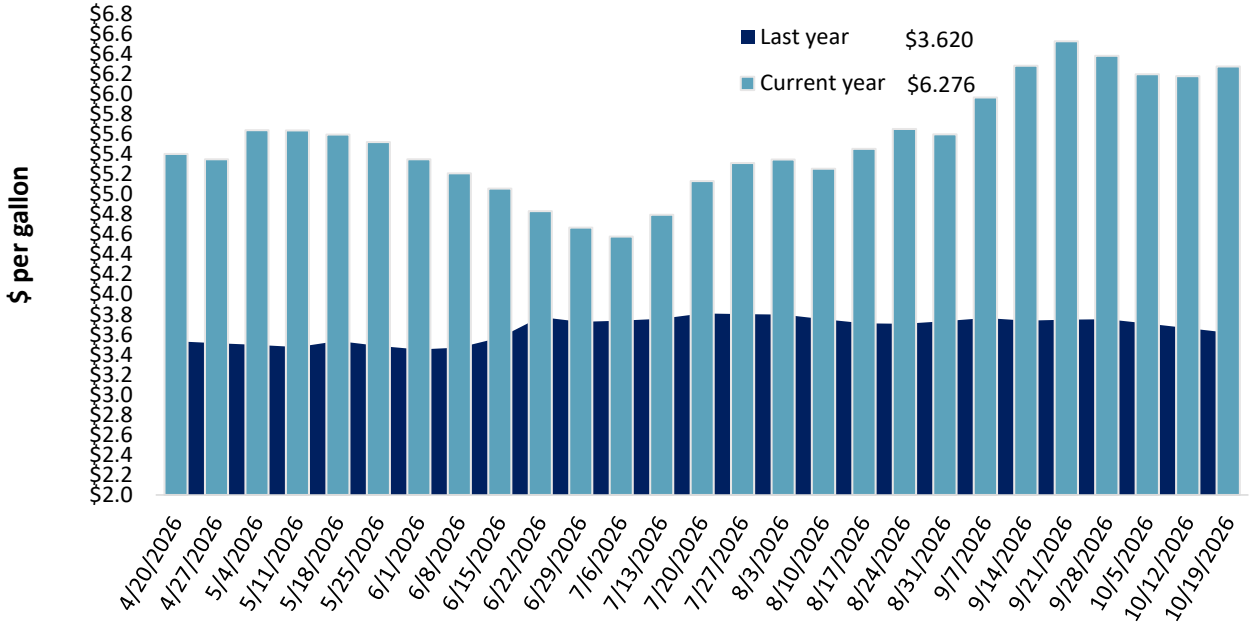
The weekly diesel price provides a proxy for trends in U.S. truck rates as diesel fuel is a significant expense for truck grain movements.

Table 13. Retail on-highway diesel prices, week ending 10/19/2026 (U.S. $/gallon)

Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	5.984	0.076	2.309
	New England	6.470	0.029	2.527
	Central Atlantic	6.508	0.037	2.630
	Lower Atlantic	5.740	0.095	2.162
II	Midwest	6.352	0.093	2.788
III	Gulf Coast	5.903	0.094	2.647
IV	Rocky Mountain	6.422	0.120	2.837
V	West Coast	7.394	0.154	2.973
	West Coast less California	6.659	0.156	2.651
	California	8.242	0.151	3.344
Total	United States	6.276	0.097	2.656

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 October 19, the U.S. average diesel fuel price increased 9.7 cents from the previous week to $6.276 per gallon, 265.6 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: 10/15/2026	573	525	1,014	1,049	122	3,283	12,648	19,096	35,027
	This week year ago	1,618	554	1,136	1,428	69	4,806	24,209	5,011	34,026
	Last 4 wks. as % of same period in prior marketing year	35	73	86	79	150	67	51	203	90
Current shipped (cumulative) export sales	Current MYTD	1,704	1,130	2,140	2,198	214	7,385	9,544	7,106	24,035
	Prior MYTD	4,499	1,555	2,782	1,971	187	10,994	9,352	683	21,029
	Current MYTD as % of prior MYTD	38	73	77	112	114	67	102	1,040	114
	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: 10/15/2026	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	8,704	12,486	-30	23,186
Japan	3,612	3,979	-9	13,485
Colombia	1,996	2,348	-15	7,639
Korea	1,578	2,335	-32	5,826
Spain	296	1,070	-72	2,730
Top 5 importers	15,890	21,148	-25	50,136
Total U.S. corn export sales	22,193	33,560	-34	69,791
% of YTD current month's export projection	26%	39%	-	-
Change from prior week	1,527	2,823	-	-
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	72%	63%	-	72%
USDA forecast October 2026	83,824	87,101	-4	-
Corn use for ethanol USDA forecast, October 2026	143,510	140,894	2	-

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: 10/15/2026	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	13,447	0	NA	19,737
Mexico	2,176	2,773	-22	4,939
Egypt	762	1,146	NA	3,402
Indonesia	509	565	-10	2,205
Japan	738	696	6	2,128
Top 5 importers	17,633	5,180	240	32,410
Total U.S. soybean export sales	26,201	14,498	81	45,208
% of YTD current month's export projection	57%	35%	-	-
Change from prior week	2,841	1,049	-	-
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	67%	36%	-	72%
USDA forecast, October 2026	46,130	41,232	12	-

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: 10/15/2026	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	2,473	2,526	-2	3,744
Philippines	1,535	1,853	-17	2,677
Japan	1,227	1,187	3	2,050
Korea	1,002	1,203	-17	1,888
Taiwan	586	577	2	1,005
Nigeria	200	1,063	-81	878
China	NA	0	NA	863
Indonesia	303	814	-63	746
Thailand	322	512	-37	690
Vietnam	326	424	-23	581
Top 10 importers	7,974	10,160	-22	15,121
Total U.S. wheat export sales	10,669	15,799	-32	21,015
% of YTD current month's export projection	52%	64%	-	-
Change from prior week	240	341	-	-
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	75%	64%	-	72%
USDA forecast, October 2026	20,412	24,712	-17	-

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.

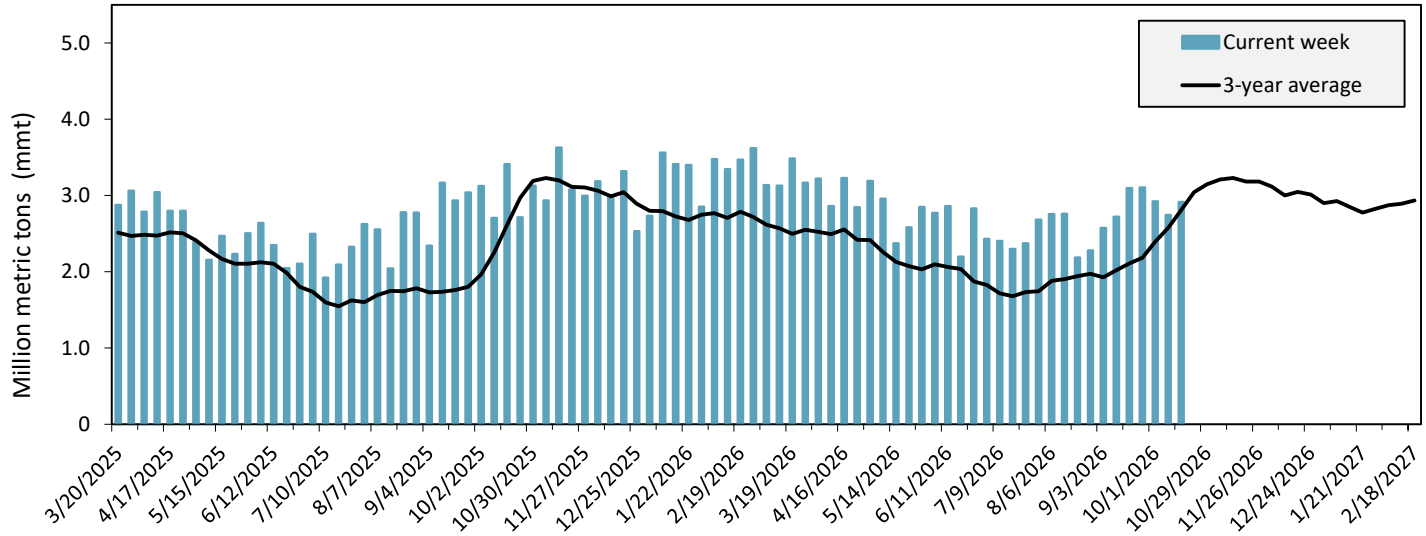
Table 18. Grain inspections for export by U.S. port region (1,000 metric tons)

Port regions	Commodity	For the week ending 10/15/2026	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	0	456	0	21,072	17,703	119	132	300	24,214
	Soybeans	683	207	330	5,071	2,155	235	471	74	2,957
	Wheat	112	197	57	8,471	9,883	86	58	70	12,271
	All grain	795	860	92	34,928	29,856	117	122	116	39,721
Mississippi Gulf	Corn	471	584	81	29,699	30,037	99	65	86	37,115
	Soybeans	982	700	140	19,608	16,671	118	173	131	23,350
	Wheat	61	37	163	2,429	3,402	71	55	52	3,980
	All grain	1,514	1,320	115	51,862	50,151	103	108	108	64,484
Texas Gulf	Corn	0	9	0	1,424	510	279	212	177	590
	Soybeans	50	0	n/a	150	358	42	20	36	1,431
	Wheat	39	24	161	2,248	4,108	55	28	63	4,690
	All grain	88	33	269	7,401	5,574	133	31	45	7,774
Interior	Corn	199	253	79	13,055	11,911	110	91	120	15,546
	Soybeans	232	129	179	5,609	5,797	97	56	66	7,713
	Wheat	29	38	77	2,479	2,590	96	88	119	3,104
	All grain	461	434	106	21,560	20,712	104	80	100	26,888
Great Lakes	Corn	0	0	n/a	381	147	260	n/a	329	414
	Soybeans	0	21	0	87	41	211	52	75	63
	Wheat	0	11	0	273	245	111	53	17	434
	All grain	0	32	0	741	433	171	89	54	911
Atlantic	Corn	2	12	17	1,479	419	353	68	100	607
	Soybeans	55	52	106	724	614	118	96	123	1,085
	Wheat	0	0	0	22	75	30	2	4	81
	All grain	58	65	88	2,226	1,108	201	75	106	1,773
All Regions	Corn	672	1,314	51	67,110	60,727	111	86	124	78,486
	Soybeans	2,002	1,109	180	31,759	25,785	123	145	105	36,852
	Wheat	240	307	78	15,923	20,304	78	52	68	24,560
	All grain	2,916	2,744	106	119,228	107,984	110	98	104	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.

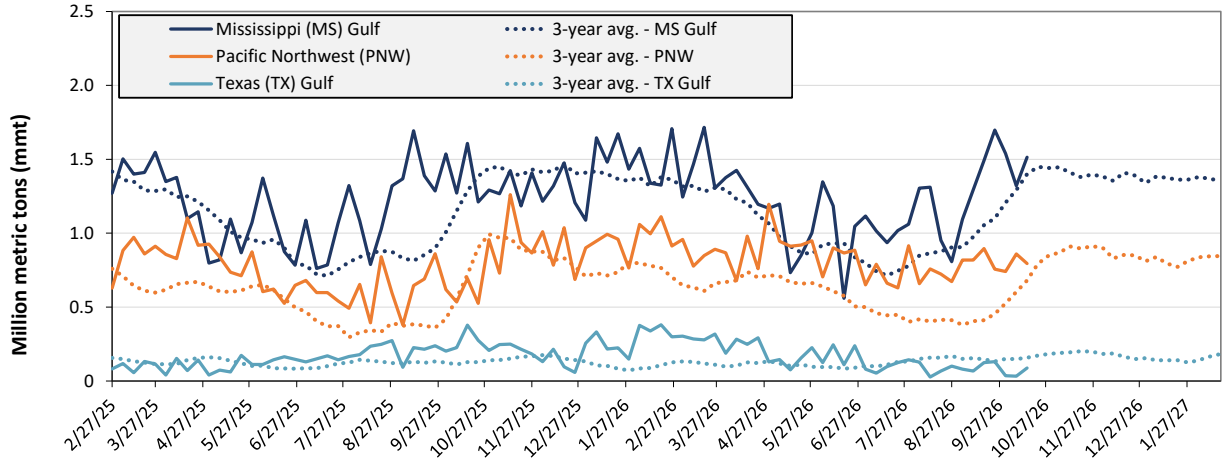
Figure 17. U.S. grain inspected for export (wheat, corn, and soybeans)



For the week ending October 15: 2.9 mmt of grain inspected, up 6 percent from the previous week, unchanged from the same week last year, and up 4 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 10/15/26 inspections (mmt):
MS Gulf: 1.51
PNW: 0.79
TX Gulf: 0.09

Percent change from:	MS Gulf	TX Gulf	U.S. Gulf	PNW
Last week	up 15	up 169	up 18	down 8
Last year (same 7 days)	up 10	down 67	down 3	up 48
3-year average (4-week moving average)	up 8	down 44	up 3	up 17

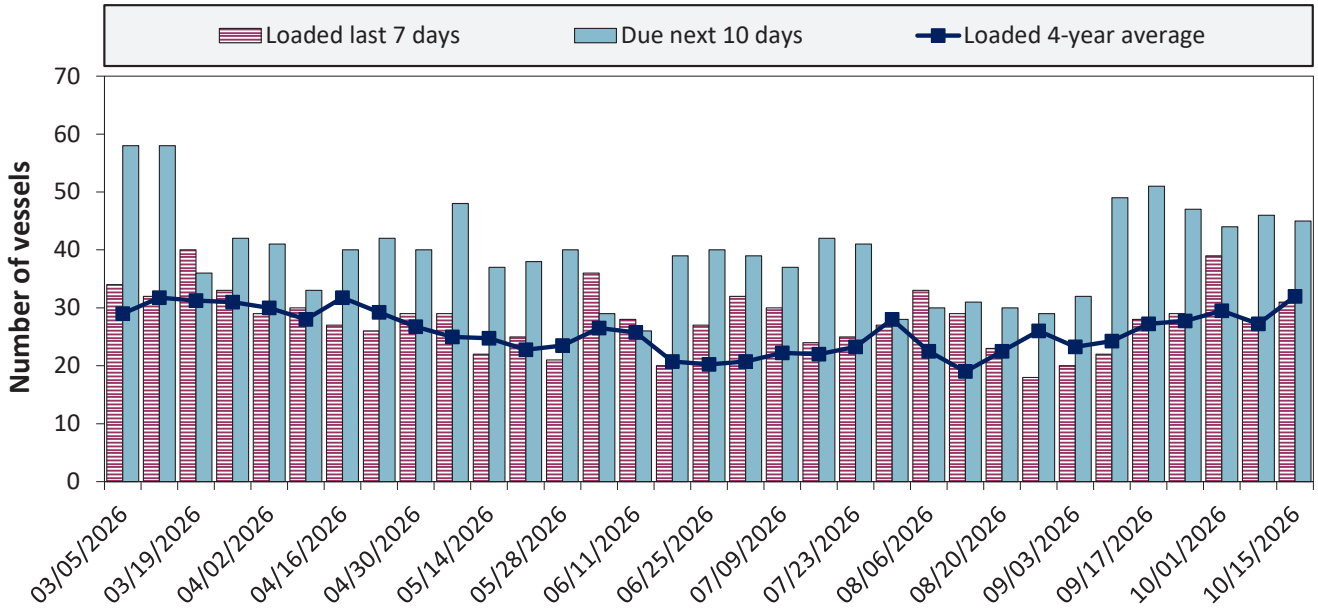
Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

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
10/15/2026	24	31	45	18
10/8/2026	27	28	46	17
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.

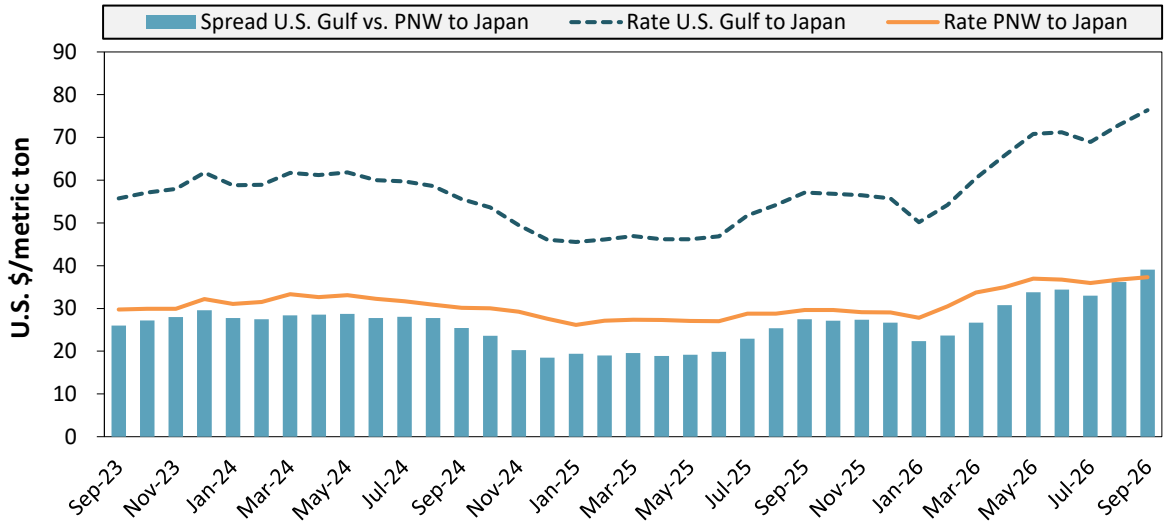
Figure 19. U.S. Gulf vessel loading activity



Week ending 10/15/26, number of vessels	Loaded	Due
Change from last year	3%	-4%
Change from 4-year average	-3%	5%

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
September 2026	$76.38	$37.31	$39.07
Change from September 2025	34%	26%	42%
Change from 4-year average	34%	20%	51%

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

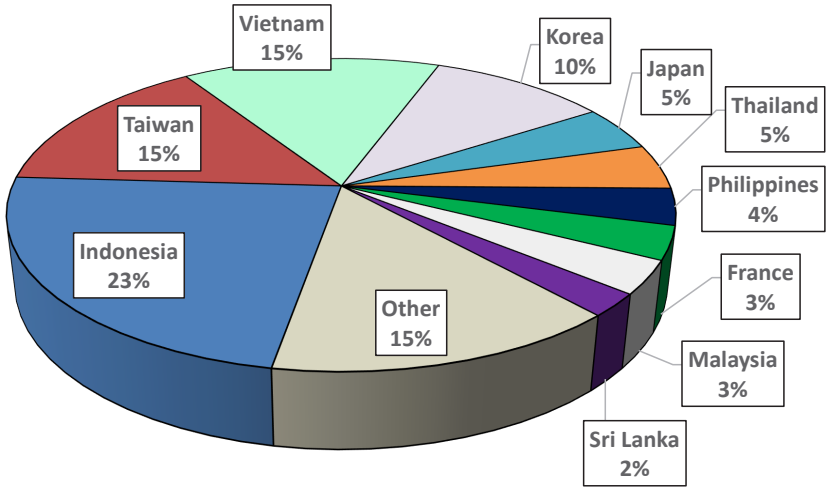
Table 20. Ocean freight rates for selected shipments, week ending 10/17/2026

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	Oct 1, 2026	Oct 22/31, 2026	68,000	77.00
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
Vancouver	Vietnam	Heavy grain	Oct 9, 2026	Nov 15/20, 2026	65,000	37.00
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	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	Indonesia	Heavy grain	Oct 2, 2026	Nov 1/6, 2026	65,000	56.90
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.

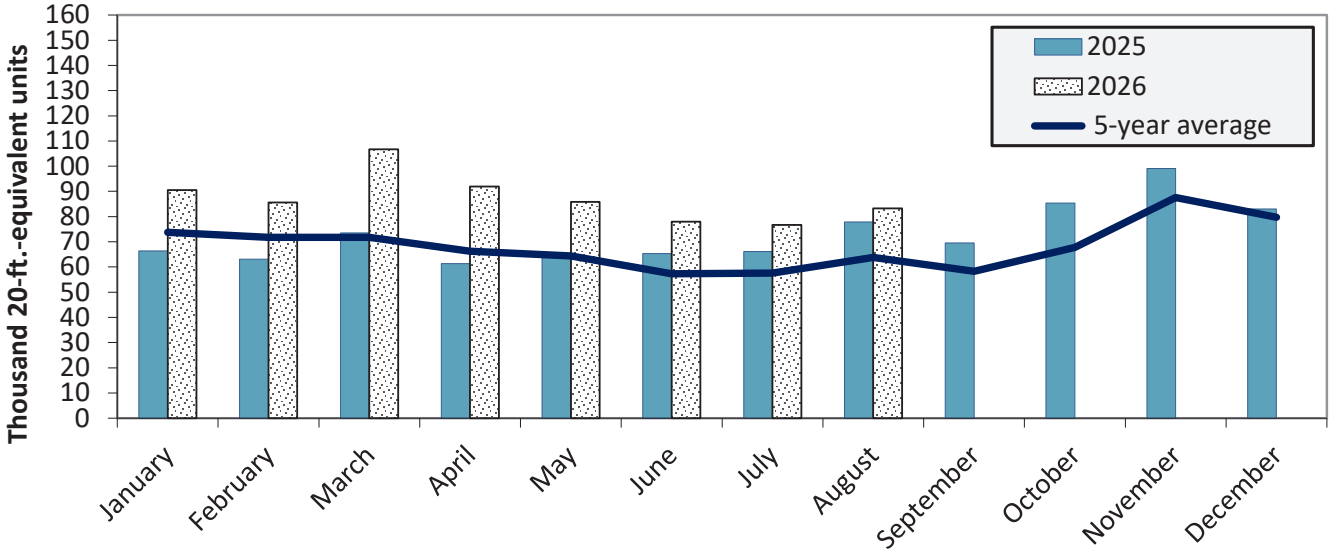
In 2025, containers were used to transport 11 percent of total U.S. waterborne grain exports. Approximately 48 percent of U.S. waterborne grain exports in 2025 went to Asia, of which 19 percent were moved in containers. Approximately 83 percent of U.S. waterborne containerized grain exports were destined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

Figure 21. Top 10 destination markets for U.S. containerized grain exports, Jan-Aug 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 August 2026 were up 7.0 percent from last year and up 30.5 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.

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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***.

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