



Grain Transportation Report

A weekly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service
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July 1, 2021

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

[FHWA Provides Almost \\$2 Million to Innovative Highway Projects in Key Grain-Producing States](#)

On May 26, the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [awarded](#) \$977,398 in grants to Michigan and \$1 million to South Dakota to help them make cost-effective, timely upgrades to their transportation infrastructure. The funding source—FHWA's Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration program—helps States make the most of limited resources. Michigan's FHWA funding will be used to improve bridge conditions on local routes. As a major grain-producing State, Michigan has more than 11,000 bridges that afford critical connections in grain transportation. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, in 2018, approximately 11 percent (1,234) of the State's 11,156 bridges were structurally deficient. FHWA's funding for South Dakota (another major grain producer) will be used to develop criteria to adjust speed limits in response to weather, road, visibility, and traffic conditions.

[Grain Inspections Lowest Since January 2019](#)

For the week ending June 24, [total inspections of grain](#) (corn, wheat, and soybeans) for export from all major U.S. export regions totaled 1.4 million metric tons (mmt). Total grain inspections were down 45 percent from the previous week, down 33 percent from last year, and down 35 percent from the 3-year average. Grain inspections were the lowest since the .500 mmt level of early January 2019. Compared to the previous week, inspections of corn were down 43 percent; wheat, down 48 percent; and soybeans, down 49 percent. These large drops in inspections reflected a 69-percent decrease in shipments through the Mississippi Gulf. Mississippi Gulf exports were down notably to Asia and South America. Pacific Northwest (PNW) grain inspections decreased 10 percent from the previous week.

[USDA Cooperative Research Studies the Effects of Rail Line Abandonment](#)

On June 28, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service published a [synopsis](#) of a [study](#) conducted in cooperation with Washington State University and the University of Oregon. The researchers sought to better understand the causes and effects of rail line abandonments, which became more common since the Staggers Rail Act of 1980. The analysis suggests lines with low or declining revenues were particularly likely to be abandoned, as well as lines that branched from a main line. The researchers also find the effects of short line entry on local rail markets (rates and tonnages) varied based on location, commodity, and the competitive environment.

Snapshots by Sector

Export Sales

For the week ending June 17, [unshipped balances](#) of wheat, corn, and soybeans totaled 22.0 mmt. This was 8 percent lower than last week and 4 percent lower than the same time last year. Net [corn export sales](#) were 0.216 mmt, up significantly from the past week. Net [soybean export sales](#) were 0.142 mmt, up significantly from the previous week. Net weekly [wheat export sales](#) for marketing year 2021/22, which began June 1, were 0.374 mmt.

Rail

U.S. Class I railroads originated 19,617 [grain carloads](#) during the week ending June 19. This was a 19-percent decrease from the previous week, 8 percent less than last year, and 13 percent lower than the 3-year average.

Average July shuttle [secondary railcar](#) bids/offers (per car) were \$258 below tariff for the week ending June 24. This was \$18 more than last week and \$287 lower than this week last year. There were no non-shuttle bids/offers this week.

Barge

For the week ending June 26, [barged grain movements](#) totaled 753,434 tons. This was 6 percent less than the previous week and 31 percent lower than the same period last year.

For the week ending June 26, 475 grain barges [moved down river](#)—14 fewer barges than the previous week. There were 424 grain barges [unloaded in New Orleans](#), 33 percent lower than the previous week.

Ocean

For the week ending June 24, 21 [oceangoing grain vessels](#) were loaded in the Gulf—30 percent fewer than the same period last year. Within the next 10 days (starting June 25), 37 vessels were expected to be loaded—8 percent fewer than the same period last year.

As of June 24, the rate for shipping a metric ton (mt) of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was \$75.00. This was 2 percent more than the previous week. The rate from PNW to Japan was \$43.00 per mt, 1 percent more than the previous week.

Fuel

For the week ending June 28, the U.S. average [diesel fuel price](#) increased 1.3 cents from the previous week to \$3.30 per gallon, 87.0 cents above the same week last year.

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Grain Transportation Update: Demand Holds Strong in Second Quarter

Major market indicators show grain transportation demand remained strong in second quarter 2021. Rail carloads were strong, but have decreased in recent weeks. For the most part, bids in the secondary shuttle market were low, and performance has improved. Barge movements reached record highs, and grain-loading activity in the U.S. Gulf has held steady over the last several weeks. Bulk grain ocean freight rates and diesel fuel prices have continued to increase. According to the June [World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates \(WASDE\)](#), total exports of the three major grains (corn, soybean, and wheat) are expected to reach 5.4 million bushels in marketing year (MY) 2021/22, down 11 percent from MY 2020/21 (see table, p. 3).

Grain Carloads Fall in Recent Weeks, but Remain Strong for Railroads in 2021

Despite trending down over the last several weeks ([GTR fig. 3](#)), grain carloads originated by U.S. Class I railroads were 14 percent above the year-to-date (YTD) average for the week ending June 19. Grain carloads are up 8 percent so far for the second quarter. Many traffic types have exceeded last year's lows, including chemicals (+3 percent YTD), coal (+10 percent YTD), metallic ores (+20 percent YTD), and intermodal units (+18 percent YTD).

[Average bids in the secondary railcar auction market](#) were generally low in April, May, and June.¹ Bids for delivery of railcars in May and June peaked around mid-April and fell as the delivery months neared. Similarly, bids for shuttle-service in July have generally fallen in the last 2 months and were about \$300 (per car) below average for the week ending June 24. In the month ahead, trades for delivery of railcars in August have been about \$240 (per car) below average ([GTR fig. 5](#)), signaling an adequate supply of rail transportation relative to demand.

System train speeds have been flat since early March, averaging about 24 miles per hour, according to Surface Transportation Board [rail service metrics](#). For the most part, unit train speeds for grain compared with 2019 levels—better than 2018, but worse than 2020. Origin dwell times for grain have improved in recent months following harsh winter weather—falling from an average high of 41 hours for the week ending February 24 to 18 hours by June 2. The number of grain cars not moved in over 48 hours has also declined over the last 3 months, falling from 1,100 cars per week in March to 640 cars in June.

Barge Movements Hit Record Highs, While Spot Freight Rates Trended Down

Severe winter weather conditions on the Upper Mississippi River significantly subsided by mid-March. Since then, downbound barged grain movements have mostly gone smoothly, apart from occasional unstable water conditions and a short-term traffic disruption in mid-May, with the closure of Hernando de Soto Bridge (on the highway I-40 in Memphis, TN). Total second-quarter volumes of downbound barged grain movements on the Mississippi River exceeded 2018's record, reaching a new historical high of 11.4 million tons, 19 percent higher than second quarter 2020 and 27 percent higher than the 4-year average.

These high volumes are mostly due to continuously high corn exports, especially to China. From first to second quarter 2021, corn increased from 66 percent to 82 percent of the total barged volumes—a record-high change for this period. On the other hand, soybeans continued to drop to 13.7 percent of total barged volumes, a historical second-quarter low.

Despite decreasing throughout the second quarter, weekly Illinois River barge spot rates also trended higher, for most of the period, than in 2020. The average April spot rate was \$22 per ton, \$7 higher than last year and \$5 higher than the 4-year average.² However, despite strong movements of the old crops, spot rates continued to soften and dropped to \$13 per ton in mid-June, about the same as last year and \$5 lower than the 4-year average. This decrease stemmed mostly from a plentiful barge supply and fairly stable navigation conditions, which reduced shippers' need to purchase additional on-the-spot services. On the other hand, interest in forward barge services has risen, mostly because of projected high demand for U.S. exports and unstable South American production of new crops. After staying relatively stable until late May/early June, Illinois River 3-month forward rates jumped to \$22 per ton for most of June, almost \$6 higher than the 4-year average.

Dry-Bulk Freight Rates Continued To Rise

Ocean freight rates for shipping bulk commodities, including grain, have risen sharply since January. As of June 24, the rate for shipping a metric ton (mt) of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was \$75.25—73 percent more than this year's first available rate (January 7), 91 percent more than the same period a year ago, and 84 percent more than the 4-year average. The rate from the Pacific Northwest to Japan was \$43.00 per mt—76 percent more than the start of the year, 110 percent more than the same period last year, and 96 percent more than the 4-year average. Also, as of June 24, shipping a metric ton of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Europe cost \$22.00—13 percent more than the beginning of the year, 26 percent more than the same period last year, and 28 percent more than the 4-year average.

¹ The secondary market provides shippers a means to obtain guaranteed rail service. The prices trade at a premium or discount relative to the tariff rate.

² All the rates are adjusted by the Producer Price Index published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Producer Price Indexes databases](#).

In second quarter 2021, rates continued to rise in response to global optimism after various successful vaccines and loosening monetary policies of major economies, such as China. Also, in second quarter 2021, bulk trade activities rose as Brazilian iron ore and soybean supply improved. According to Drewry Maritime Research, Inc., Australia’s strong grain harvest lifted its grain exports in the second quarter, boosting the demand for vessels, which raised rates. Meanwhile, grain vessels in the U.S. Gulf have remained steady over the past 8 weeks. From May 28 to June 24, an average of 33 oceangoing grain vessels were loaded per week in the U.S. Gulf, compared to 32 vessels per week over the previous 4 weeks, and 30 vessels per week for the same period last year.

Diesel Fuel Prices Continue Upward Climb

According to the Energy Information Administration, in second quarter 2021, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil and diesel prices rose above their pre-pandemic levels. Supporting these prices were a rising demand for domestic crude oil and distillates, tight supplies, and declining stock levels. YTD spot WTI prices reached their highest level since October 2018, climbing by 55 percent to \$73.64 per barrel. EIA reported YTD national on-highway diesel fuel prices climbed by 25 percent (66 cents), to \$3.30 a gallon. In the agriculture-rich Midwest region, prices climbed 25 percent (64 cents), to \$3.23 per gallon. Regarding fuel for ocean shipping, Ship & Bunker reported YTD very low sulfur fuel oil (VLSFO) prices at Los Angeles and Long Beach increased by 34 percent to \$571 per metric ton. Meanwhile, prices in Houston, TX, climbed by 35 percent to \$537 per metric ton. Both prices are 12-month highs but remain below pre-pandemic levels. Ship & Bunker’s YTD global 20 port average VLSFO bunker fuel price rose by 32 percent to a 12-month high of \$557 per metric ton.

Outlook for MY 2021/22

According to USDA’s June [WASDE](#), total U.S. exports of the three major grains are expected to reach 5.4 million bushels in MY 2021/22, down 11 percent from MY 2020/21 (see table). From MY 2020/21, corn production is expected to increase by 6 percent, to 15 million bushels; soybean production is projected to increase by 7 percent, to 4.4 million bushels; and wheat production is expected to increase by 4 percent, to 1.9 million bushels.

China continues to drive U.S. corn exports. YTD total U.S. export sales commitments of corn are 66 percent more than the same time last year, with China accounting for 34 percent of that demand. However—with increased competition from Argentina, Brazil, and Ukraine—MY 2021/22 U.S. exports are projected to decline by 14 percent to 62.3 million metric tons (mmt) ([GTR table 13](#)) from last year. Still, if realized, projected volumes for U.S. corn exports would be the third-largest on record.

China also continues to drive the export demand for U.S. soybeans. The decline in African Swine Fever outbreaks and rebounding pig numbers have increased Chinese demand for U.S.

soybeans. Total soybean export commitments are 39 percent above last year, with China accounting for 58 percent of the total. In MY 2021/22, U.S. soybean exports are projected to fall by 9 percent to 56.5 mmt, because of tight stocks and strong domestic demand for soybean meal and oil ([GTR table 14](#)). Soybean oil use is expected to rise because of growth in biodiesel use.

YTD total wheat commitments for MY 2021/22 are down 9 percent from MY 2020/21 ([GTR table 15](#)). Because of more competition from major exporting countries, U.S. wheat exports are projected to decline by 9 percent in MY 2021/22. Although still strong, Chinese demand for imported wheat is expected to decline with stronger domestic production. Total U.S. wheat-export commitments to China are 52 percent lower than at the same time last year. With record wheat crops and competitive prices, Russia is expected to remain the top wheat exporter in MY 2021/22, despite uncertainty caused by the country’s floating tax policy. GTRContactUs@usda.gov

	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Total	Y/Y
United States 2021/22 (Projected)					
Production	14,990	4,405	1,898	21,293	5.7%
Exports	2,450	2,075	900	5,425	-11.3%
Domestic use	12,315	2,344	1,205	15,864	1.9%
Ending stocks	1,357	155	770		
Total use	14,765	4,420	2,105		
Stocks/use	9.2%	3.5%	36.6%		
United States 2020/21 (Estimated)					
Production	14,182	4,135	1,826	20,143	5.4%
Exports	2,850	2,280	985	6,115	38.2%
Domestic use	12,170	2,281	1,123	15,574	0.0%
Ending stocks	1,107	135	852		
Total use	15,020	4,560	2,108		
Stocks/use	7.4%	3.0%	40.4%		
2019/20					
Production	13,620	3,552	1,932	19,104	
Exports	1,778	1,682	965	4,425	
Domestic use	12,185	2,270	1,123	15,578	
Ending stocks	1,919	525	1,028		
Total use	13,963	3,952	2,089		
Stocks/use	13.7%	13.3%	49.2%		

Source: USDA, World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates, June 2021

Grain Transportation Indicators

Table 1

Grain transport cost indicators¹

For the week ending	Truck	Rail		Barge	Ocean	
		Non-Shuttle	Shuttle		Gulf	Pacific
06/30/21	221	291	214	156	335	305
06/23/21	221	291	212	164	329	301

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); n/a = not available.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 2

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

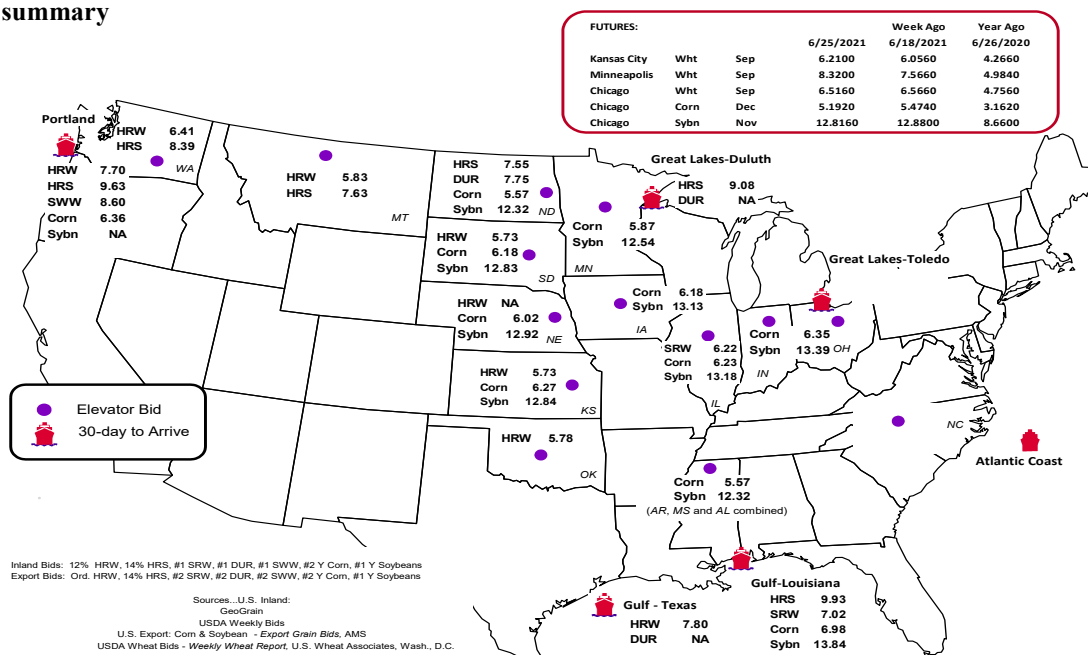
Commodity	Origin-destination	6/25/2021	6/18/2021
Corn	IL-Gulf	-0.75	-0.63
Corn	NE-Gulf	-0.96	-0.64
Soybean	IA-Gulf	-0.71	-0.81
HRW	KS-Gulf	-2.07	-2.03
HRS	ND-Portland	-2.08	-1.84

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			
6/23/2021 ^p	546	784	4,657	0	5,987	6/19/2021	3,544
6/16/2021 ^r	442	1,188	4,701	0	6,331	6/12/2021	2,870
2021 YTD ^r	34,617	38,098	161,064	9,887	243,666	2021 YTD	69,613
2020 YTD ^r	10,505	21,208	116,407	4,975	153,095	2020 YTD	59,641
2021 YTD as % of 2020 YTD	330	180	138	199	159	% change YTD	117
Last 4 weeks as % of 2020 ²	189	101	104	0	105	Last 4wks. % 2020	130
Last 4 weeks as % of 4-year avg. ²	103	93	87	0	87	Last 4wks. % 4 yr.	128
Total 2020	45,294	64,116	299,882	24,458	433,750	Total 2020	126,407
Total 2019	40,974	51,167	251,181	16,192	359,514	Total 2019	127,622

¹Data is incomplete as it is voluntarily provided.

²Compared with same 4-weeks in 2020 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.

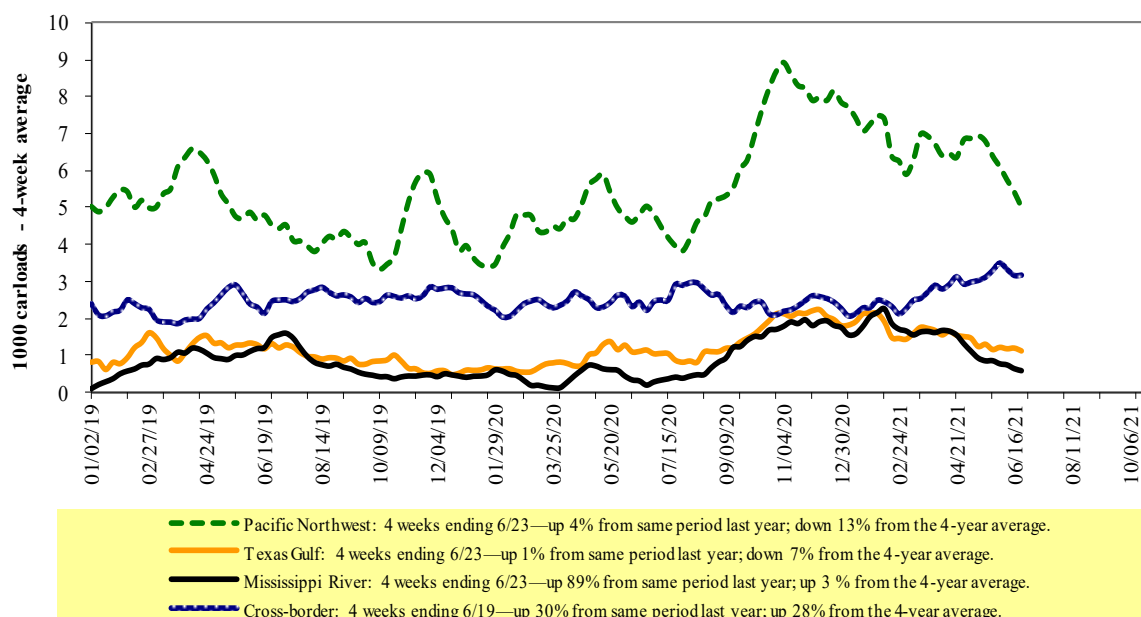
YTD = year-to-date; p = preliminary data; r = revised data; n/a = not available; wks. = weeks; avg. = average.

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: 6/19/2021	East		West			U.S. total	Canada	
	CSXT	NS	BNSF	KCS	UP		CN	CP
This week	1,526	2,438	9,292	1,052	5,309	19,617	3,815	5,203
This week last year	1,361	2,381	11,815	1,154	4,726	21,437	4,954	5,035
2021 YTD	47,047	62,568	307,514	26,537	156,463	600,129	112,031	128,620
2020 YTD	41,920	57,944	268,502	25,958	123,856	518,180	97,968	110,125
2021 YTD as % of 2020 YTD	112	108	115	102	126	116	114	117
Last 4 weeks as % of 2020*	113	111	100	123	114	107	89	96
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr. avg.**	101	98	95	113	119	102	92	96
Total 2020	91,659	130,521	613,630	57,782	296,701	1,190,293	238,676	261,778

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

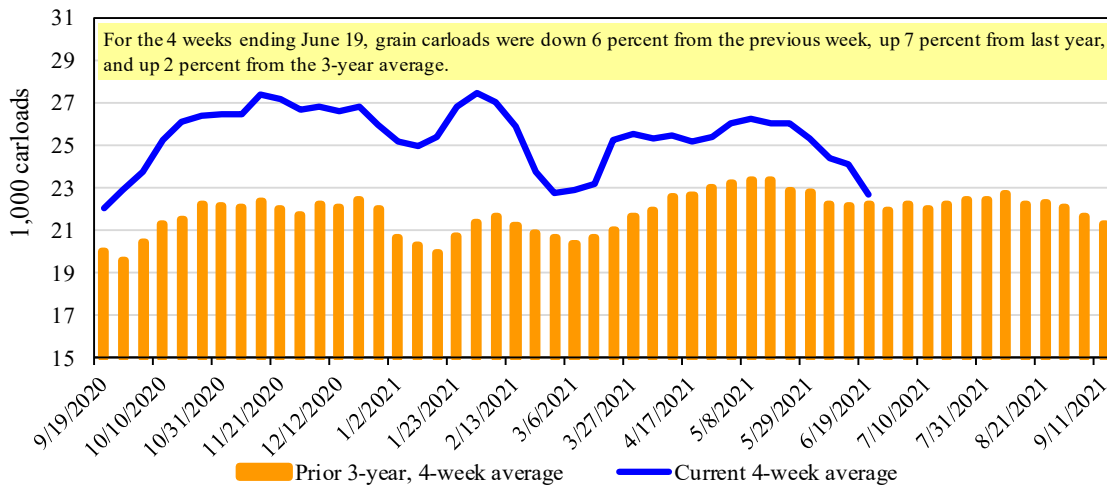
**The past 4 weeks as a percent of the same period from the prior 3-year average. YTD = year-to-date; avg. = average; yr. = year.

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: 6/24/2021		Delivery period							
		Jul-21	Jul-20	Aug-21	Aug-20	Sep-21	Sep-20	Oct-21	Oct-20
BNSF ³	COT grain units	0	0	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids
	COT grain single-car	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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 bid	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.

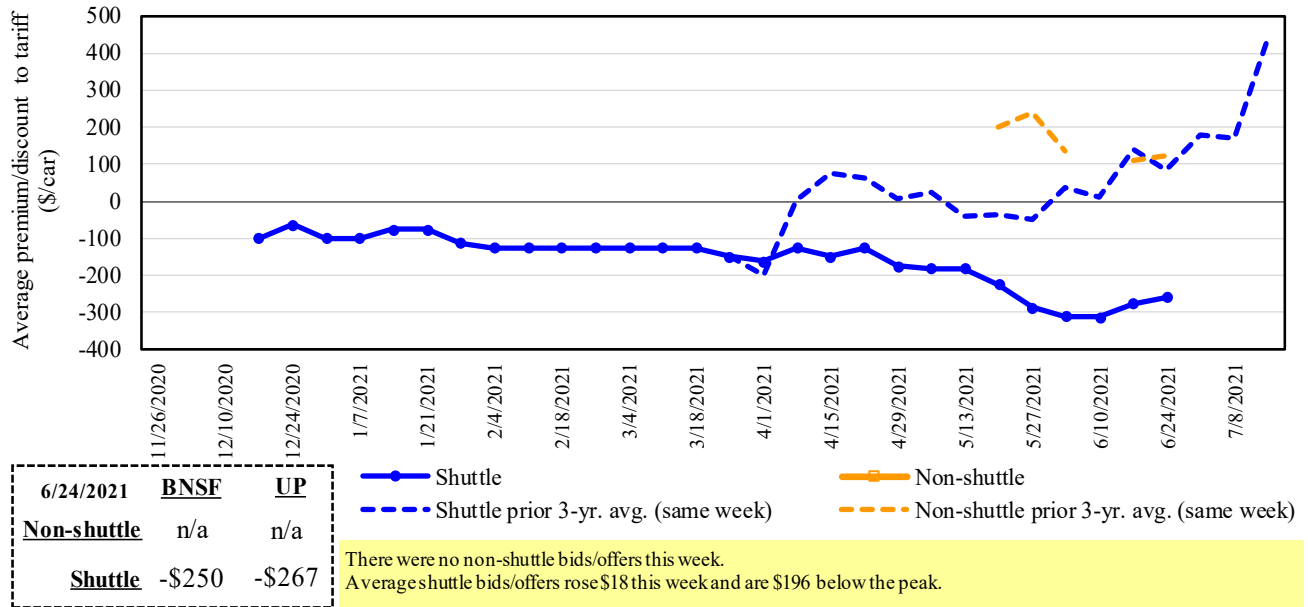
Region 1 includes: AR, IL, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX, WI, and Duluth, MN.

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

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

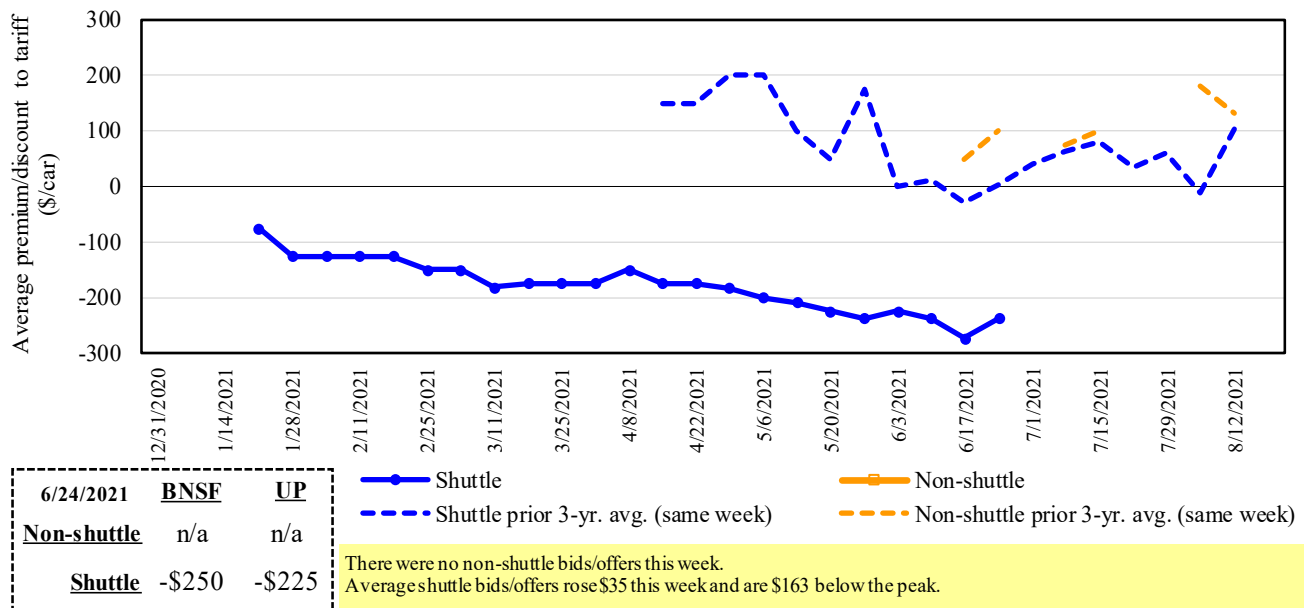
The **secondary rail market** information reflects trade values for service that was originally purchased from the railroad carrier as some form of guaranteed freight. The **auction and secondary rail** values are indicators of rail service quality and demand/supply.

Figure 4
Bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in July 2021, 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.

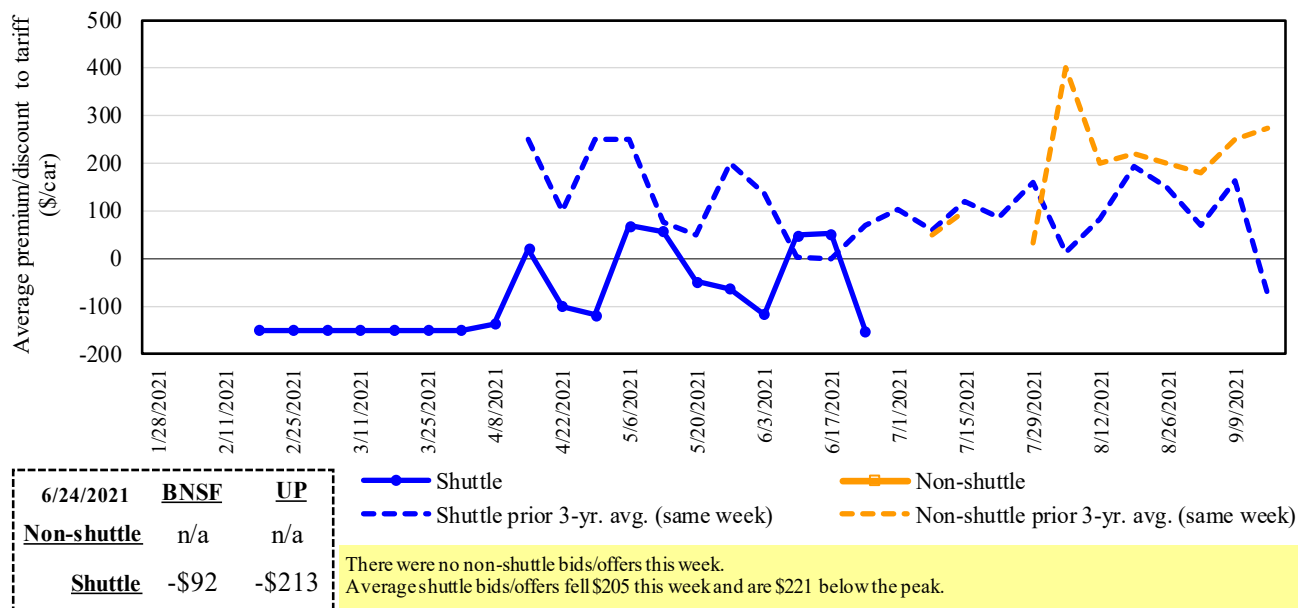
Figure 5
Bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in August 2021, secondary market



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 September 2021, 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.

Table 6

Weekly secondary railcar market (\$/car)¹

For the week ending: 6/24/2021		Delivery period					
		Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-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 2020	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 2020	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle	BNSF-GF	(250)	(250)	(92)	744	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	58	58	(398)	(6)	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2020	(133)	(100)	(135)	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP-Pool	(267)	(225)	(213)	738	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	(23)	13	(13)	305	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2020	(442)	(188)	(194)	388	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

July 2021	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	\$3,695	\$116	\$37.85	\$1.03	5
	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	\$205	\$46.97	\$1.28	3
	Sioux Falls, SD	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$6,851	\$0	\$68.03	\$1.85	-2
	Colby, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$4,801	\$224	\$49.90	\$1.36	3
Corn	Amarillo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	\$5,121	\$312	\$53.95	\$1.47	4
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$3,900	\$231	\$41.03	\$1.04	4
	Toledo, OH	Raleigh, NC	\$7,833	\$0	\$77.79	\$1.98	15
	Des Moines, IA	Davenport, IA	\$2,455	\$49	\$24.87	\$0.63	3
	Indianapolis, IN	Atlanta, GA	\$5,979	\$0	\$59.37	\$1.51	3
	Indianapolis, IN	Knoxville, TN	\$5,040	\$0	\$50.05	\$1.27	3
Soybeans	Des Moines, IA	Little Rock, AR	\$3,900	\$144	\$40.16	\$1.02	5
	Des Moines, IA	Los Angeles, CA	\$5,780	\$419	\$61.56	\$1.56	7
	Minneapolis, MN	New Orleans, LA	\$3,631	\$241	\$38.45	\$1.05	6
	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	\$231	\$48.42	\$1.32	4
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	\$368	\$63.35	\$1.72	4
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	\$231	\$40.23	\$1.02	4
	Lincoln, NE	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$3,880	\$0	\$38.53	\$0.98	0
	Des Moines, IA	Amarillo, TX	\$4,320	\$181	\$44.70	\$1.14	5
	Minneapolis, MN	Tacoma, WA	\$5,180	\$0	\$51.44	\$1.31	0
Soybeans	Council Bluffs, IA	Stockton, CA	\$5,100	\$0	\$50.65	\$1.29	2
	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	\$267	\$51.06	\$1.39	4
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	\$4,945	\$0	\$49.11	\$1.34	3
	Grand Island, NE	Portland, OR	\$5,260	\$377	\$55.97	\$1.52	5

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: July 2021			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	\$6,813	\$160	\$71.25	\$1.94	2
	KS	Guadalajara, JA	\$7,531	\$703	\$84.13	\$2.29	4
	TX	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$4,347	\$97	\$45.41	\$1.23	2
Corn	IA	Guadalajara, JA	\$8,902	\$604	\$97.13	\$2.46	3
	SD	Celaya, GJ	\$8,140	\$0	\$83.17	\$2.11	0
	NE	Queretaro, QA	\$8,300	\$330	\$88.18	\$2.24	3
	SD	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$6,905	\$0	\$70.55	\$1.79	0
	MO	Tlahpantla, EM	\$7,665	\$322	\$81.61	\$2.07	3
	SD	Torreón, CU	\$7,690	\$0	\$78.57	\$1.99	0
Soybeans	MO	Bojay (Tula), HG	\$8,547	\$567	\$93.12	\$2.53	3
	NE	Guadalajara, JA	\$9,157	\$593	\$99.61	\$2.71	3
	IA	El Castillo, JA	\$9,410	\$0	\$96.15	\$2.61	-1
	KS	Torreón, CU	\$8,014	\$411	\$86.08	\$2.34	3
Sorghum	NE	Celaya, GJ	\$7,772	\$535	\$84.88	\$2.15	3
	KS	Queretaro, QA	\$8,108	\$200	\$84.88	\$2.15	2
	NE	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$6,713	\$161	\$70.23	\$1.78	2
	NE	Torreón, CU	\$7,092	\$376	\$76.31	\$1.94	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.

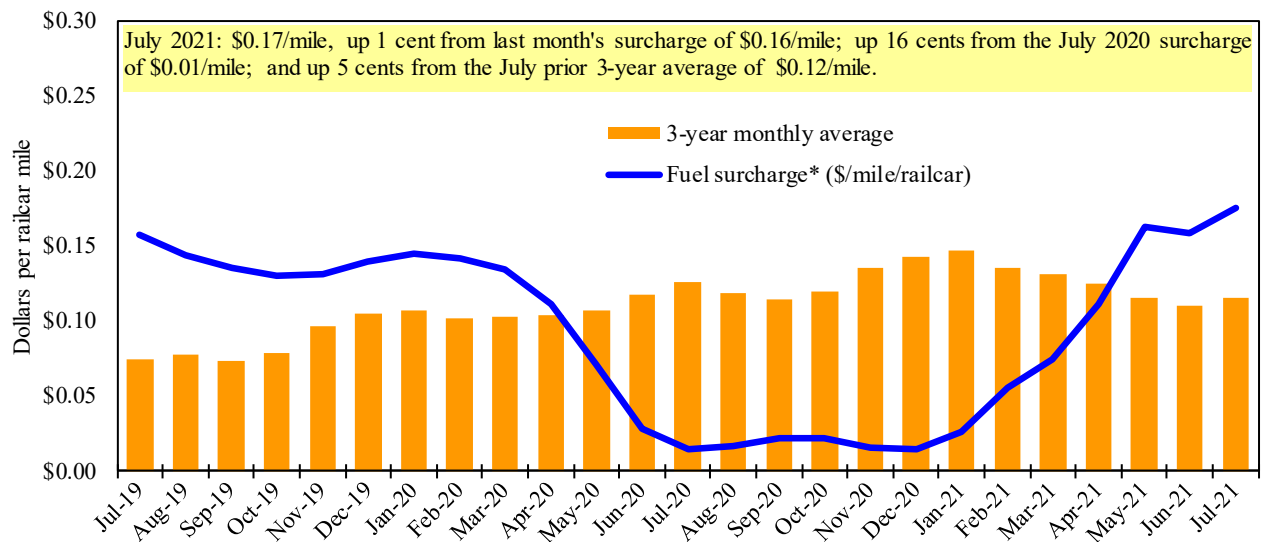
²Fuel surcharge adjusted to reflect the change in Ferrocarril Mexicano, S.A. de C.V railroad fuel surcharge policy as of 10/01/2009.

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.

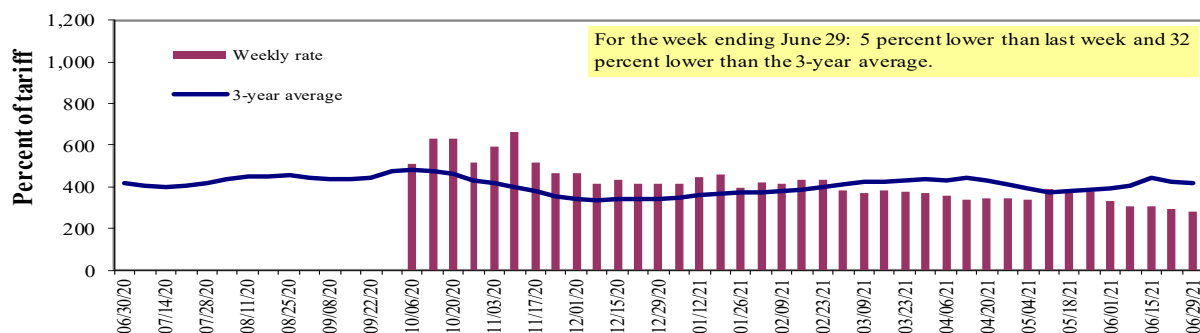
**CSX strike price changed from \$2.00/gal. to \$3.75/gal. starting January 1, 2015.

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

Barge Transportation

Figure 8

Illinois River barge freight rate^{1,2,3}



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

³No rates data from 06/23/20 to 9/29/20 due to the lock closure for rehabilitation and replacement of lock machinery.

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	6/29/2021	393	284	281	200	214	214	196
	6/22/2021	413	303	295	203	226	226	200
\$/ton	6/29/2021	24.33	15.11	13.04	7.98	10.04	8.65	6.15
	6/22/2021	25.56	16.12	13.69	8.10	10.60	9.13	6.28
Current week % change from the same week:								
	Last year	5	-1	-	9	15	15	9
	3-year avg. ²	-13	-32	-32	-30	-23	-24	-22
Rate ¹	July	393	284	281	200	210	210	196
	September	519	470	468	419	458	458	400

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

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 9

Benchmark tariff rates

Calculating barge rate per ton:

$$(\text{Rate} * 1976 \text{ tariff benchmark rate per ton}) / 100$$

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

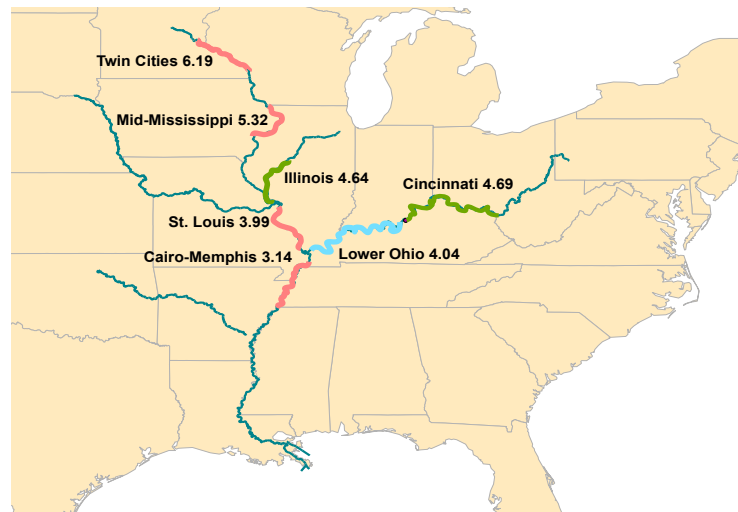
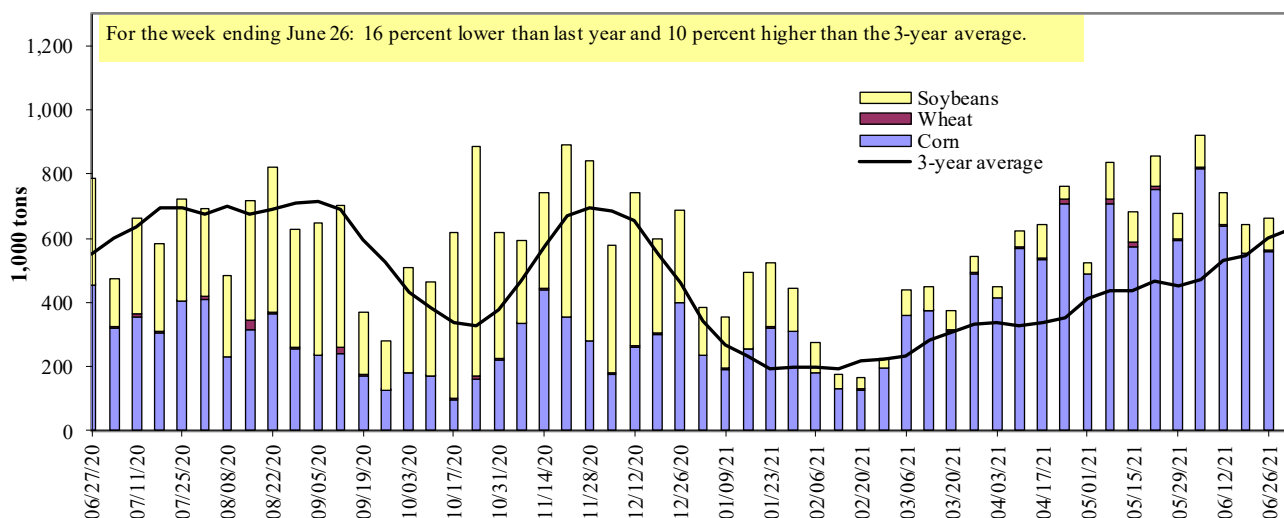


Figure 10

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 06/26/2021	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River					
Rock Island, IL (L15)	312	0	50	0	362
Winfield, MO (L25)	432	5	68	0	505
Alton, IL (L26)	461	5	87	0	553
Granite City, IL (L27)	557	5	100	0	662
Illinois River (La Grange)	117	0	28	0	145
Ohio River (Olmsted)	38	4	28	2	71
Arkansas River (L1)	0	17	4	0	21
Weekly total - 2021	595	25	132	2	753
Weekly total - 2020	632	69	361	30	1,092
2021 YTD ¹	15,459	658	4,388	191	20,696
2020 YTD ¹	9,010	823	5,655	81	15,568
2021 as % of 2020 YTD	172	80	78	237	133
Last 4 weeks as % of 2020 ²	122	74	45	61	94
Total 2020	18,942	1,765	19,205	237	40,149

¹ Weekly total, YTD (year-to-date), and calendar year total include MI/27, OH/Olmsted, and AR/1; Other refers to oats, barley, sorghum, and rye.

Total may not add exactly due to rounding.

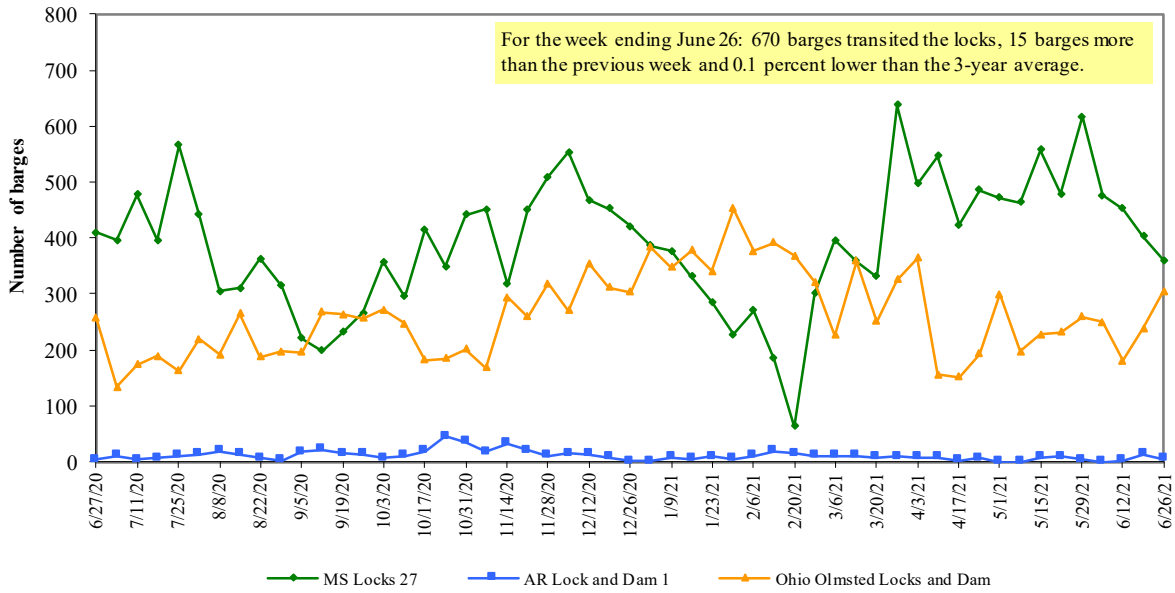
² As a percent of same period in 2020.

Note: L (as in "L15") refers to a lock, locks, or locks and dam facility.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Figure 11

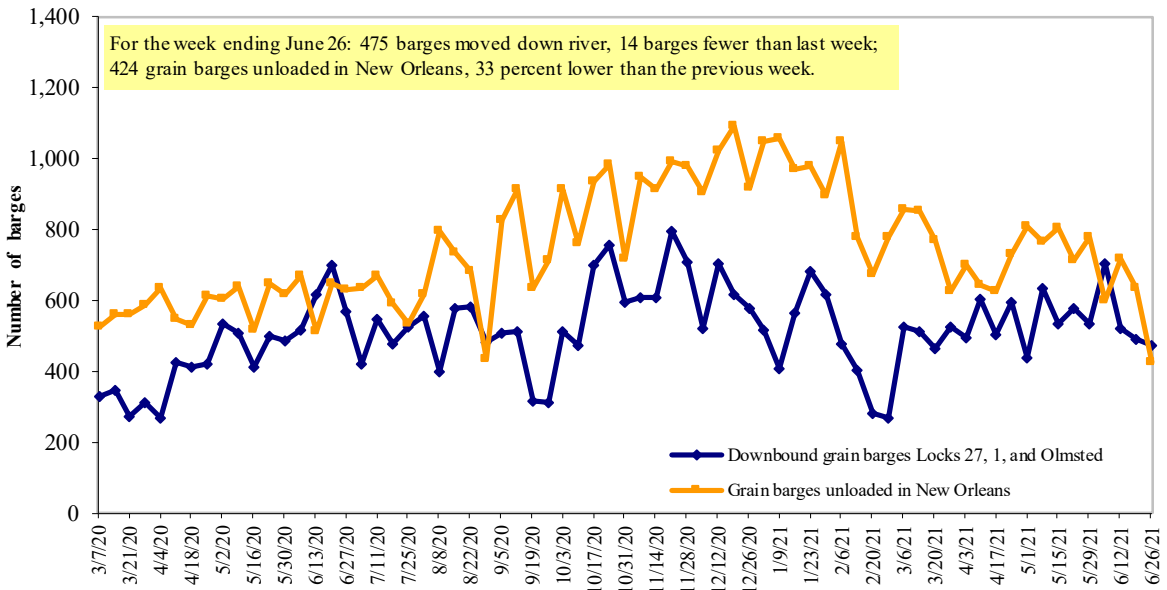
Upbound empty barges transiting Mississippi River Locks 27, Arkansas River Lock and Dam 1, and Ohio River Olmsted Locks and Dam



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 6/28/2021 (U.S. \$/gallon)

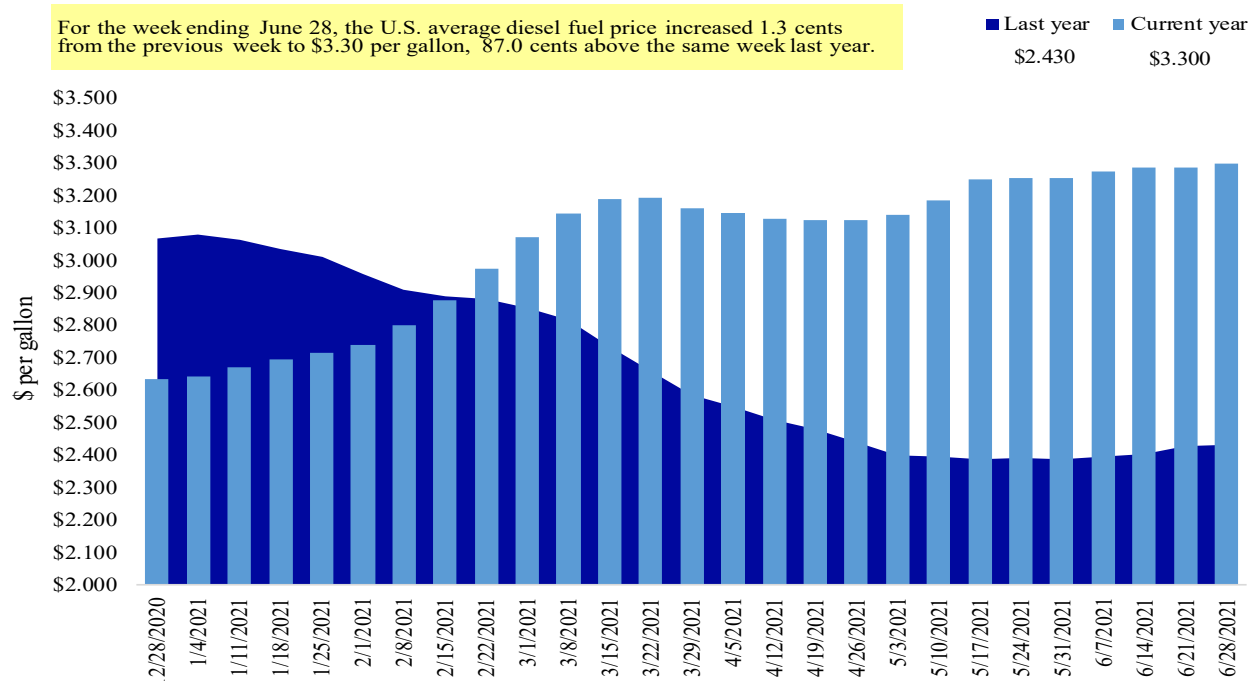
Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	3.290	0.015	0.766
	New England	3.238	0.025	0.590
	Central Atlantic	3.451	0.010	0.747
	Lower Atlantic	3.191	0.016	0.814
II	Midwest	3.239	0.008	0.940
III	Gulf Coast	3.044	0.002	0.850
IV	Rocky Mountain	3.433	0.040	1.090
	West Coast	3.839	0.030	0.891
V	West Coast less California	3.494	0.032	0.908
	California	4.127	0.028	0.881
Total	United States	3.300	0.013	0.870

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



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									
6/17/2021	1,558	1,031	1,496	1,055	8	5,148	13,269	3,623	22,041
This week year ago	1,988	601	1,643	1,028	224	5,483	9,510	7,893	22,885
Cumulative exports-marketing year²									
2020/21 YTD	420	23	326	231	26	1,026	56,263	58,136	115,425
2019/20 YTD	603	43	319	249	85	1,299	32,443	36,688	70,429
YTD 2020/21 as % of 2019/20	70	53	102	93	31	79	173	158	164
Last 4 wks. as % of same period 2019/20*	65	132	79	88	9	78	164	48	103
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; 2021/22 marketing year now in effect for wheat while corn and soybeans remain in effect for the 2020/21 marketing year.

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 06/17/2021	Total commitments ²			% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr. avg. 2017-19
	2021/22 next MY	2020/21 current MY	2019/20 last MY		
			- 1,000 mt -		
Mexico	1,943	14,786	13,988	6	14,869
Japan	825	10,484	9,362	12	11,221
Columbia	0	3,846	4,195	(8)	4,830
Korea	0	3,528	2,568	37	4,011
China	10,744	23,407	1,336	1,653	909
Top 5 importers	13,512	56,051	31,448	78	35,840
Total U.S. corn export sales	15,681	69,532	41,952	66	49,983
% of projected exports	25%	96%	93%		
Change from prior week ²	311	216	462		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	86%	81%	75%		72%
USDA forecast June 2021	62,341	72,519	45,242	60	
Corn use for ethanol USDA forecast, June 2021	132,080	128,270	123,368	4	

¹ Based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for 2019/20; marketing year (MY) = Sep 1 - Aug 31.

² Cumulative 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.

³ FAS 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 06/17/2021	Total commitments ²			% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr. avg. 2017-19
	2021/22 next MY	2020/21 current MY	2019/20 last MY		
			1,000 mt -		- 1,000 mt -
China	2,983	35,778	15,775	127	19,106
Mexico	563	4,751	4,574	4	4,591
Egypt	0	2,777	3,406	(18)	2,980
Indonesia	1	2,251	1,896	19	2,360
Japan	74	2,274	2,344	(3)	2,288
Top 5 importers	3,622	47,832	27,995	71	31,324
Total U.S. soybean export sales	7,609	61,760	44,580	39	49,352
% of projected exports	13%	99%	97%		
change from prior week ²	47	142	602		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	48%	77%	63%		63%
USDA forecast, June 2021	56,540	62,125	45,831	136	

¹Based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for 2019/20; 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 06/17/2021	Total Commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr. avg. 2018-20
	2021/22 current MY	2020/21 last MY		
		1,000 mt -		- 1,000 mt -
Mexico	1,001	543	84	3,388
Philippines	881	1,011	(13)	3,121
Japan	604	682	(12)	2,567
Korea	366	516	(29)	1,501
Nigeria	539	340	59	1,490
China	269	561	(52)	1,268
Taiwan	184	263	(30)	1,187
Indonesia	62	185	(67)	1,131
Thailand	120	174	(31)	768
Italy	39	195	(80)	681
Top 10 importers	4,063	4,471	(9)	17,102
Total U.S. wheat export sales	6,174	6,782	(9)	24,617
% of projected exports	25%	25%		
change from prior week ²	374	449		
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	66%	66%		69%
USDA forecast, June 2021	24,523	26,839	(9)	

¹Based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for 2020/21; 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 06/24/21	Previous week*	Current week as % of previous	2021 YTD*	2020 YTD*	2021 YTD as % of 2020 YTD	Last 4-weeks as % of:		2020 total*
							Last year	Prior 3-yr. avg.	
Pacific Northwest									
Wheat	110	277	40	8,001	7,946	101	75	95	15,966
Corn	427	324	132	10,758	5,253	205	123	127	9,969
Soybeans	4	0	n/a	3,755	2,747	137	130	3	14,028
Total	541	601	90	22,514	15,945	141	99	96	39,963
Mississippi Gulf									
Wheat	38	68	56	1,186	1,864	64	50	63	3,422
Corn	380	1,208	31	25,205	15,003	168	128	142	28,781
Soybeans	11	114	10	10,212	10,445	98	35	26	38,013
Total	429	1,389	31	36,604	27,311	134	98	98	70,215
Texas Gulf									
Wheat	96	197	49	1,929	2,074	93	127	115	4,248
Corn	0	31	0	270	409	66	48	45	723
Soybeans	0	0	n/a	656	7	n/a	n/a	0	2,098
Total	96	228	42	2,855	2,489	115	116	101	7,068
Interior									
Wheat	57	19	299	1,354	1,132	120	103	130	2,263
Corn	176	182	97	4,734	4,079	116	120	121	8,683
Soybeans	89	84	106	3,150	3,176	99	89	69	7,274
Total	322	285	113	9,238	8,387	110	109	102	18,220
Great Lakes									
Wheat	0	20	0	229	299	77	43	49	891
Corn	7	0	n/a	39	0	n/a	n/a	21	111
Soybeans	0	13	0	26	61	42	29	13	1,111
Total	7	33	22	293	359	82	44	28	2,113
Atlantic									
Wheat	0	0	n/a	74	5	n/a	58	174	65
Corn	0	0	n/a	14	8	174	n/a	0	33
Soybeans	5	5	105	1,047	405	258	118	39	1,870
Total	5	5	105	1,135	419	271	109	39	1,968
U.S. total from ports*									
Wheat	301	581	52	12,773	13,319	96	81	95	26,854
Corn	991	1,745	57	41,021	24,753	166	124	131	48,301
Soybeans	109	216	51	18,846	16,839	112	52	31	64,394
Total	1,401	2,541	55	72,640	54,911	132	100	96	139,548

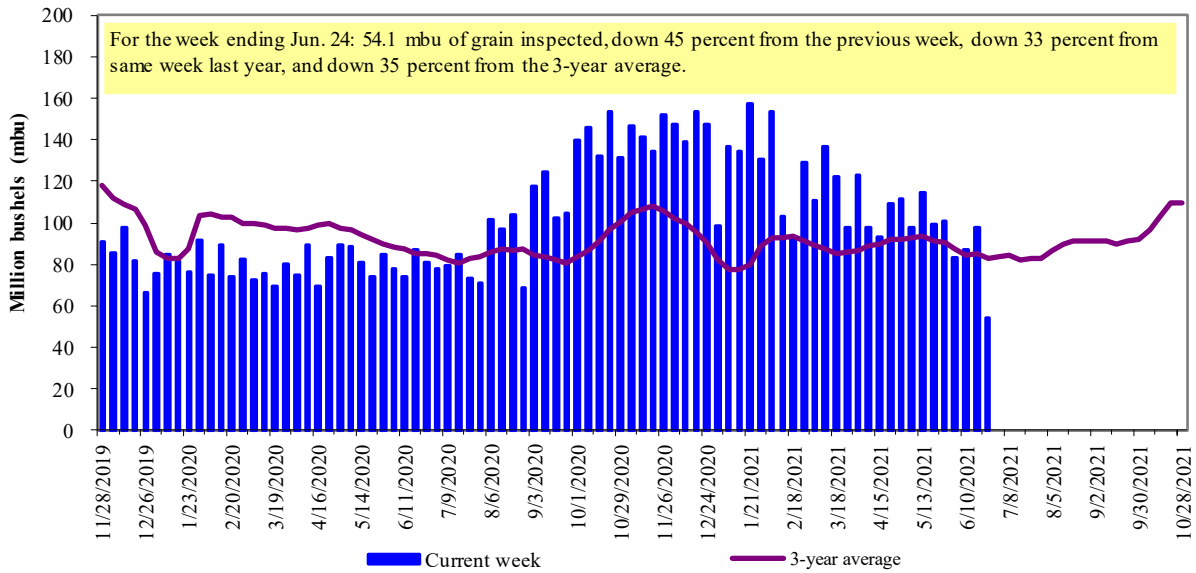
*Data includes revisions from prior weeks; some regional totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

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)

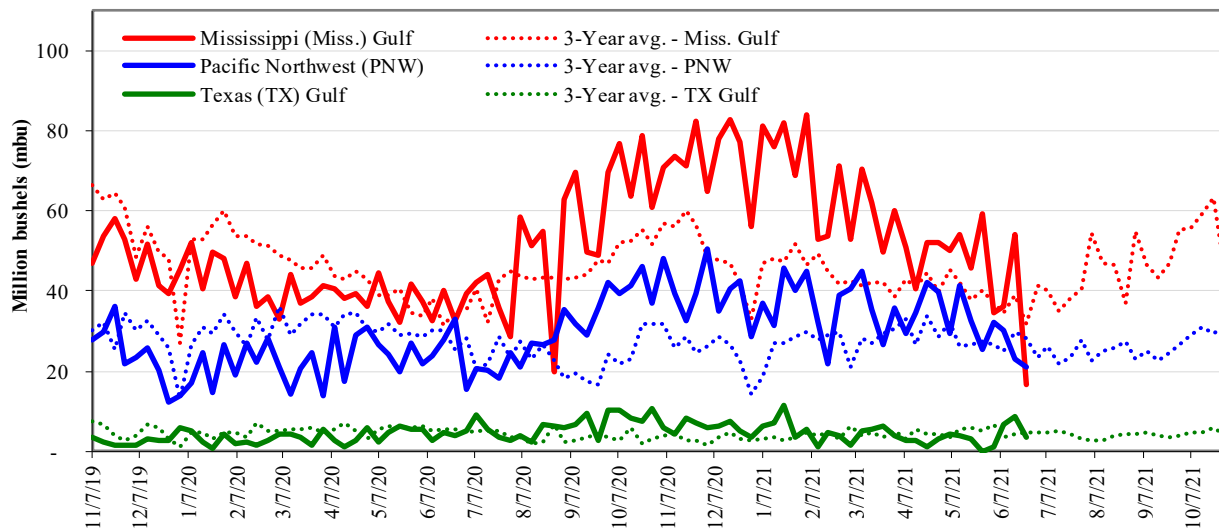


Note: 3-year average consists of 4-week running average.

Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Figure 15

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



Week ending 06/24/21 inspections (mbu):		Percent change from:			
MS Gulf:	16.8	Last wk:	down 69	down 58	down 68
PNW:	21.0	Last Year (same wk):	down 49	down 10	down 45
TX Gulf:	3.5	3-yr avg.(4-wk. mov. Avg):	down 53	down 27	down 50
					down 23

Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Ocean Transportation

Table 17

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

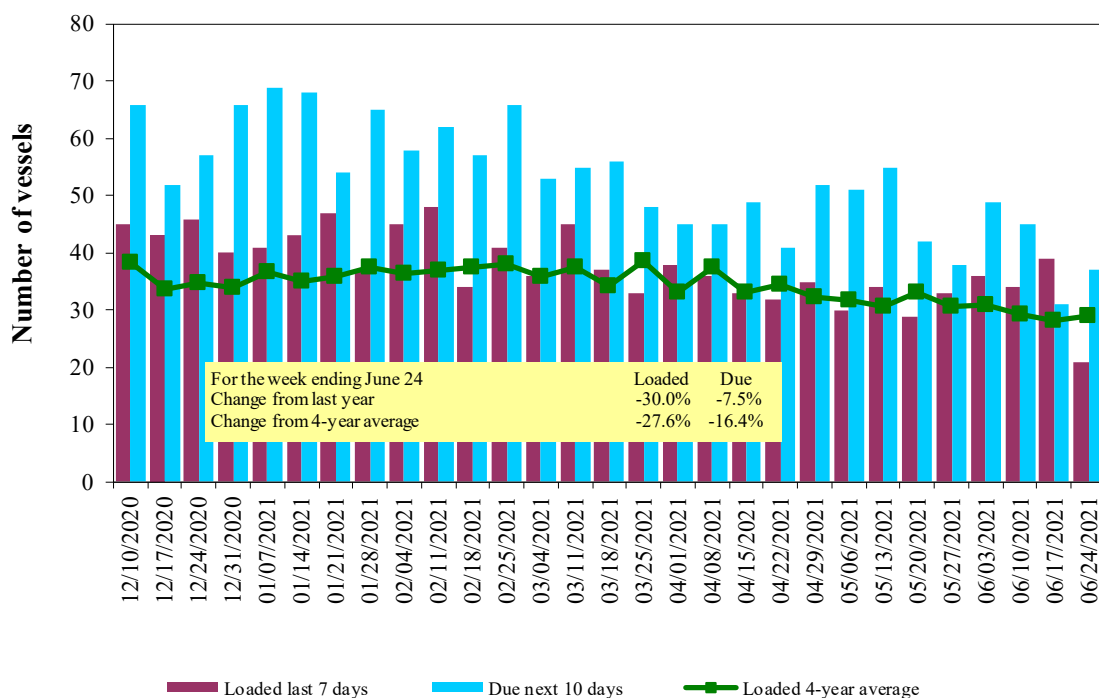
Date	Gulf			Pacific Northwest
	In port	Loaded	Due next	In port
		7-days	10-days	
6/24/2021	18	21	37	5
6/17/2021	15	39	31	10
2020 range	(22...60)	(23...46)	(34...68)	(7...24)
2020 average	37	33	49	15

Note: n/a = not available due to holiday.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 16

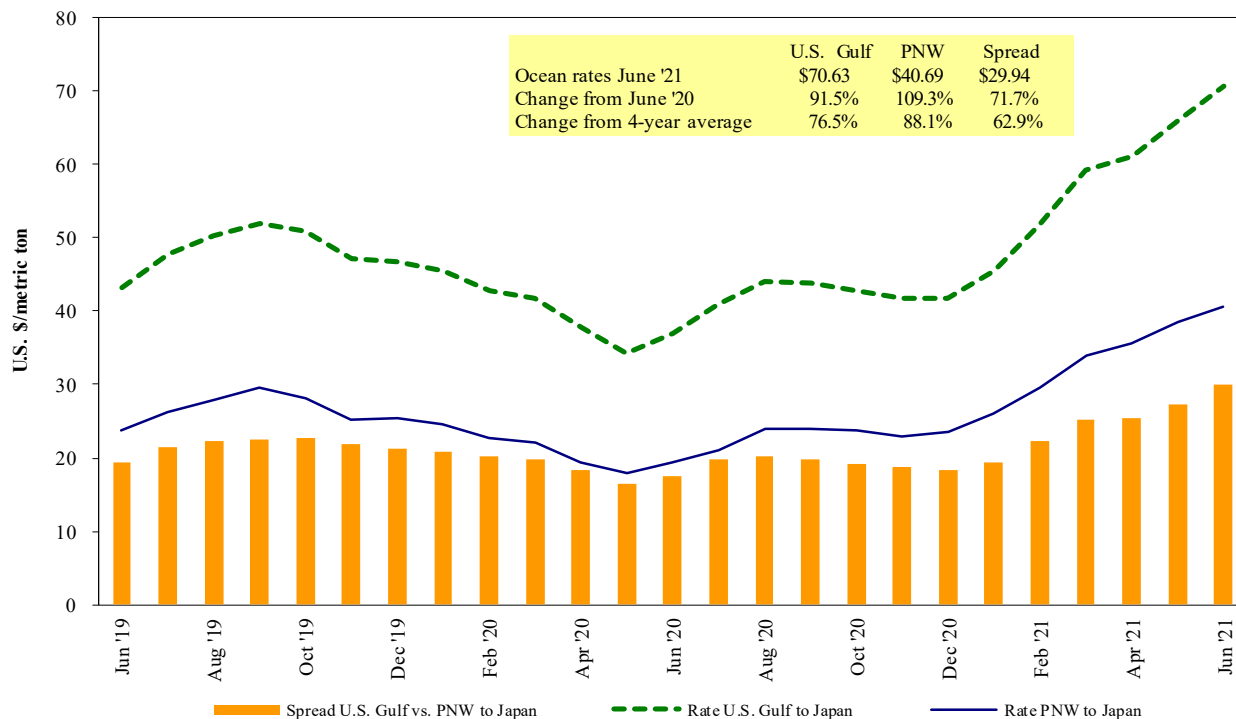
U.S. Gulf¹ vessel loading activity



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 06/26/2021

Export region	Import region	Grain types	Loading date	Volume loads (metric tons)	Freight rate (US\$/metric ton)
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Heavy grain	Oct 1/10	48,000	70.10
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Heavy grain	Aug 21/Sep 9	50,000	60.90
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Heavy grain	Aug 1/10	50,000	69.75
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Heavy grain	Jul 1/15	50,000	64.10
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Grain	May 25/ Jun 25	50,000	46.85 op 47.85
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Heavy grain	Apr 15/May 15	50,000	47.00
U.S. Gulf	Sudan	Wheat	May 20/30	48,000	112.75*
U.S. Gulf	Djibouti	Wheat	Jul 6/16	5,880	85.70*
PNW	Japan	Wheat	Jul 25/ Aug 5	32,590	64.00
PNW	Japan	Wheat	Jul 16/31	30,250	64.35
PNW	Japan	Wheat	Jun 5/15	50,600	49.30
PNW	Yemen	Wheat	Jun 10/20	22,230	132.25*
PNW	Taiwan	Heavy grain	Aug 20/30	35,000	64.20*
PNW	Taiwan	Wheat	May 29/ Jun 12	45,665	48.00

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

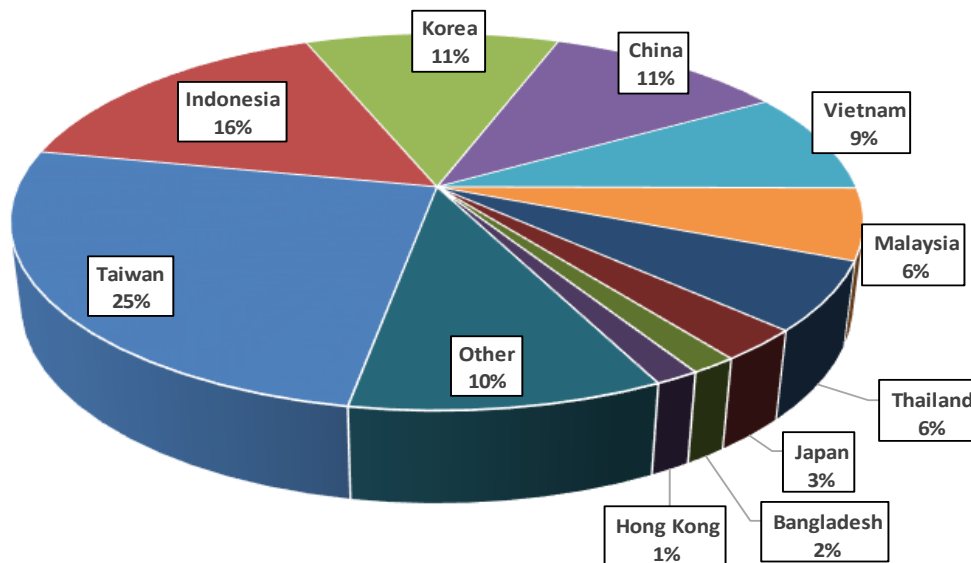
Note: Rates shown are per metric ton (2,204.62 lbs. = 1 metric ton), free on board (F.O.B), except where otherwise indicated;

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.

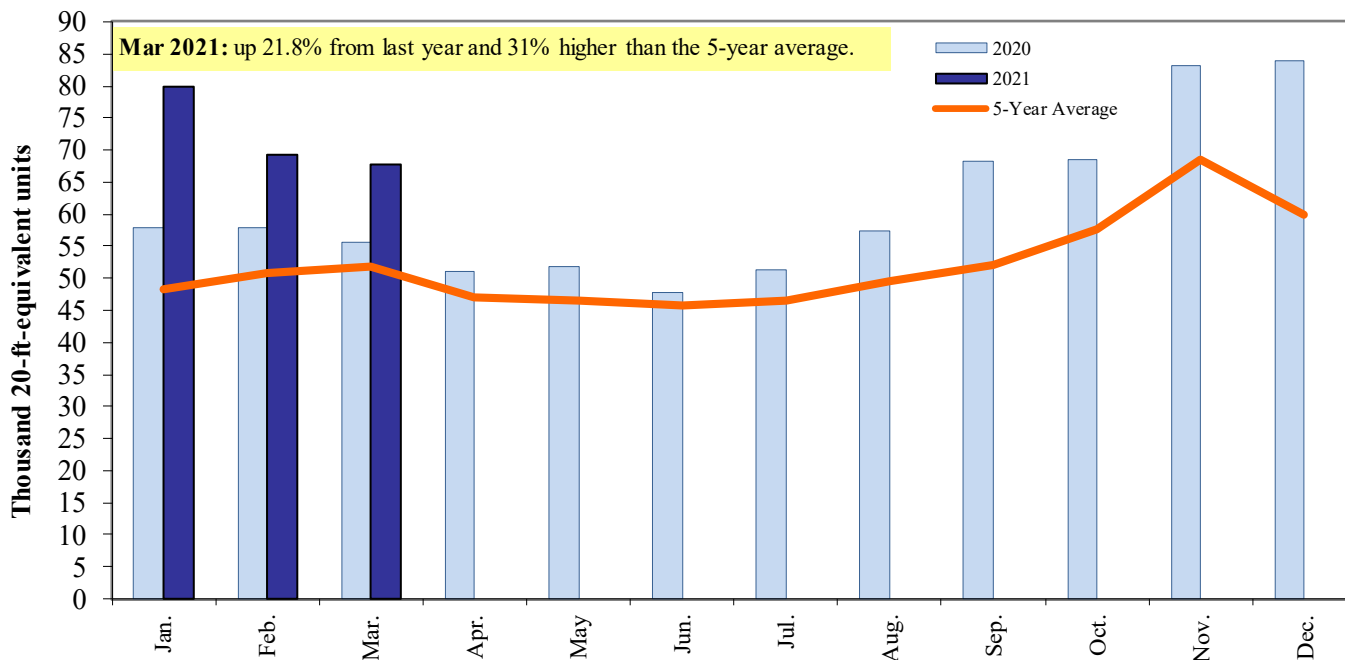
Figure 18
Top 10 destination markets for U.S. containerized grain exports, Jan-Mar 2021



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 U.S. containerized grain exports



Note: The following Harmonized Tariff Codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 100190, 100200, 100300, 100400, 100590, 100700, 110100, 110220, 110290, 1201, 120100, 120190, 120810, 230210, 230310, 230330, and 230990.

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

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