United States Department of Agriculture

Grain Transportation Report

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WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Grain Inspections Continue to Recede

For the week ending March 5, **total inspections of grain** (corn, wheat, soybeans) from all major export regions reached 2.2 million metric tons (mmt), down 9 percent from the past week and last year, and 2 percent below the 3-year average. Inspections decreased for each of the three major grains. Despite the drop, however, Pacific Northwest grain inspections increased 5 percent from the previous week as corn shipments to Asia increased. Mississippi Gulf grain inspections dropped 20 percent from the past week as wheat and corn inspections decreased.

Average U.S. Diesel Prices Rose Over 6 Consecutive Weeks

For the week ending March 9, the U.S. average diesel price of $2.94 per gallon was unchanged from the previous week, but had increased by 11 cents since the week ending February 2. However, the prices are still $1.08 below the same period a year ago. According to Energy Information Administration, the U.S. average gasoline prices have risen because of rising crude oil prices and several outages at West Coast refineries.

Floods Slow Ohio River Barge Traffic; Expected to Impact Lower Mississippi River

During the first week of March**,** heavy rain followed by rapid snow melt has caused significant flooding on portions of the Ohio River. Barge operators have indicated a reduced demand for barge services as high water has limited barge activities. Flood levels at Cairo, IL, where the Ohio flows into the lower Mississippi River, are expected to crest at 46 feet—6 feet above flood stage—by March 19. Higher river flows will also impact the lower Mississippi River. At Memphis, TN, Mississippi River levels are expected to crest at 30 feet—4 feet below flood stage—by March 22.

USDA Raises Corn Export Forecast on Higher Projected Global Demand

On March 10, in its March ***World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report*** USDA increased its projected corn exports by 50 million bushels to 1.8 billion bushels, or 45.72 million metric tons. The increase was based on higher projected global demand and strong export sales commitments to date. USDA also lowered the projected corn use for ethanol by 50 million bushels based on a higher conversion rate from corn to ethanol and increased other projected domestic use categories, leaving domestic use unchanged. The increase in projected corn exports could translate into stronger demand for barge service in the coming months.

Snapshots by Sector

Export Sales

During the week ending February 19, **unshipped balances** of wheat, corn, and soybeans totaled 28.0 mmt, 12 percent lower than the same time last year. **Corn export sales** reached 0.83 mmt, up 16 percent from the previous week. **Wheat sales** of 0.47 mmt were up 43 percent, and **soybeans sales** of 0.5 mmt were up 9 percent from the previous week.

Rail

U.S. railroads originated 20,537 **carloads of grain** during the week ending February 28, down 10 percent from last week, up 4 percent from last year, and 7 percent higher than the 3-year average.

During the week ending March 5, average March shuttle **secondary railcar bids/offers per car** were $125 below tariff, up $50 from last week and $2,813 lower than last year. Non-shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers were $82 below tariff, $1,282 lower than last year.

Barge

During the week ending March 7, **barge grain movements** totaled 514,404 tons—10 percent higher than the previous week and 2 percent lower than the same period last year.

During the week ending March 7, 319 grain barges **moved down river**, up 19 percent from last week; 521 grain barges were **unloaded in New Orleans**, down 29 percent from the previous week.

Ocean

During the week ending March 5, 41 **ocean-going grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf, 5 percent less than the same period last year. Fifty-eight vessels are expected to be loaded within the next 10 days, 11 percent less than the same period last year.

During the week ending March 6, the ocean freight rate for shipping bulk grain from the Gulf to Japan was $32 per mt, up 3 percent from the previous week. The cost of shipping from the PNW to Japan was $18 per mt, up 6 percent from the previous week.

Containerized Grain Exports

Containerized grain exports to Asia in December were 52,071 TEU, 34 percent lower than the previous year, 1 percent lower than the 5-year average, and 3 percent lower than November movements.

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Web: http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/TS056.03-12-2015

Feature Article/Calendar

U.S. Agricultural Exports: The Effects of the 2014-15 West Coast Port Disruptions

The health of the U.S. farm economy depends on exports. USDA's February 19 *Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade* highlights an astonishing trend for American farm exports that began in 2009.[1] U.S. agricultural exports have climbed 47 percent in value, from $96.3 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2009 to the most-recent forecast of $141.5 billion in FY 2015. Overall, those exports would be expected to support more than 1 million American jobs.[2] In calendar year 2014, 71 percent of U.S. agricultural exports by volume (149 million metric tons) and 71 percent of imports by volume (44 million metric tons) were waterborne.

Containerized waterborne U.S. agricultural exports moving through the West Coast ports accounted for about 61 percent of the volume cited above, and containerized waterborne U.S. agricultural imports accounted for 25 percent. Thus, the West Coast container ports serve as a critical gateway for trade with Asia and the rest of the world for U.S. agriculture and many other industries. The efficient operation of these ports is critical to many agricultural exports, including high-valued perishable products. However, in 2014 the operations of these ports were disrupted due to prolonged labor negotiations. The delays significantly affected agricultural exports.

In this article, we analyze data from the Port Import Export Reporting Service (PIERS) to see how agricultural exports changed in 2014 compared to the three-year average from 2011 through 2013. In the 4 years from 2011 to 2014, containerized agricultural exports moving through the West Coast ports averaged 22 million metric tons (mmt), valued at over $35 billion dollars per year (*see table*).

U.S. Containerized Agricultural Exports through All West Coast (WC) Ports, 4-year Average, 2011-2014

Commodity	Volume in 1,000 metric tons	% of Total WC	Value in $ 1,000s	% of Total WC
Animal Feed	6,649	30%	6,606,688	19%
Soybeans	2,054	9%	1,670,776	5%
Meat	1,414	6%	3,847,560	11%
Vegetables	1,411	6%	1,389,370	4%
Fruit	1,063	5%	972,086	3%
Subtotal	**12,591**	**56%**	**14,486,480**	**41%**
Other	5,174	23%	10,199,600	29%
Top 10 Total	**17,120**	**77%**	**24,822,862**	**71%**
Total WC Ag. Exports	**22,295**	**100%**	**35,022,462**	**100%**

Source: Port Import Export Reporting Service (PIERS), monthly data.

During this period, animal feed and soybeans accounted for 39 percent of containerized agricultural exports moving through the West Coast ports. The top 10 of containerized agricultural exports, which accounted for 56 percent by volume of total agricultural exports moving through these ports, also included high-value products such as meat, vegetables, oranges, and other fruit, dairy products, nuts, hides and skins, raw cotton, and grocery items.

On February 20, after 9 months of negotiations that began on May 12, 2014, the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), representing the ocean carriers and terminal operating companies, and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), representing the labor needed for efficient container operations, announced a tentative agreement on a new 5-year contract covering workers at all West Coast container ports.[3] Details of the terms are not yet publicly available. The next step is for the Union to ratify the contract, which could take a few months to complete.[4] While the union is going through the ratification process, port operations have returned to normal and the backlogs that resulted from the dispute are being worked down.

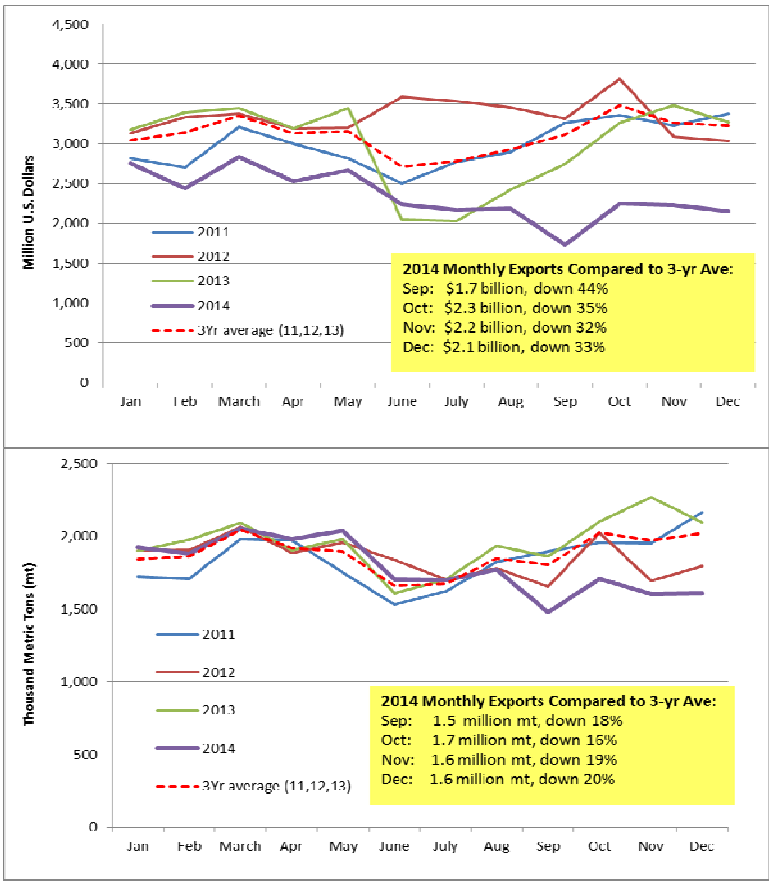
Because the labor contract for the West Coast container ports expired on July 1, 2014, but a tentative agreement was not reached until February 20, 2015, the normal labor-management disagreements on port operations could not be resolved via dock arbitration, as is normally the case under contract terms. This resulted in significant congestion at ports and movements of imports and exports through the West Coast container ports were significantly disrupted. That included containers of agricultural commodities for export, as well as soybeans, animal feed, and grain

[1] See data in Table 1 of USDA-ERS report (http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/1785157/aes85.pdf).
[2] Every $1 billion of U.S. agricultural exports in 2010 required 7,800 American jobs throughout the economy (http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/agricultural-trade-multipliers/effects-of-trade-on-the-us-economy.aspx).
[3] This analysis includes 6 West Coast ports: Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA; Oakland, CA; Seattle/Tacoma, WA; and, Portland, OR.
[4] http://www.ilwu.org/negotiating-committee-reaches-tentative-agreement-on-new-longshore-contract/

products that are shipped from the Midwest and transloaded from covered hopper cars; and meat and poultry that are transloaded from refrigerated box cars into containers at the port. Containerized agricultural exports through these ports decreased significantly during the last 4 months of 2014, the last available data. Bulk grain continued to move without disruption during this time, because the grain elevators operate under a separate contract between the Pacific Northwest Grain Handlers Association and ILWU that was ratified on August 26, 2014.

The waterborne commerce data, as reported by PIERS, show that in the second half of 2014, containerized agricultural exports moving through the West Coast ports were lower than the previous 3-year average, especially during September through December. The containerized agricultural exports moving through the affected ports were reduced by 32 to 44 percent of the 3-year average in terms of value, and between 16 and 20 percent in terms of quantity, during the last 4 months of 2014 (*see figures 1 and 2*).

Figures 1 and 2: Monthly U.S. Containerized Agricultural Exports Moving through West Coast Ports, 2011-2014 and 2011-13 average



By the end of October, dock congestion issues began to worsen and port terminals, trucking companies, and railroads that serve the ports were periodically unable to accept additional export cargo. Exporters and importers were forced to pay demurrage and detention charges for the containers and rail cars.

- Import and export cargo was diverted to other ports in the U.S. East and Gulf coasts, Mexico, and Canada.
- Western intermodal rail traffic showed weekly decreases into 2015, while it increased on all other major railroads.[1]
- Some cargo destined for export was stored or diverted to the domestic market, lowering prices.

Currently, the vessel backlog continues to gradually decrease. Some shippers estimate it could take another 2 to 3 months to return to normal operations, while others say perhaps as long as 6 months. It will likely vary by port, commodity, and company. USDA's AMS has no estimates of the amount of time it will take for the backlogs to be completely cleared.

The immediate economic impacts of the port slowdown include: short-term loss of market share for U.S. producers; disruption of the agricultural supply chain for such products as animal feed, soybeans, meat, cotton, vegetables, and fruit; increased transportation and storage costs; and loss of some perishable products. Some market analysts have indicated it is possible the West Coast ports could suffer some longer-term market share losses to non-U.S. agricultural products. In addition, long-term market share losses for West Coast container ports may remain if some U.S. exporters continue to rely on new supply chain arrangements with other ports in Canada, Mexico, or the U.S. Gulf and East coasts.

The diverse businesses that represent U.S. agriculture depend on a strong and efficient multimodal transportation system to maintain the competitive position U.S. food products have gained in international trade. The West Coast ports must continue to operate efficiently and reliably for those businesses to remain strong and competitive.
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[1][2]AMS Analysis of the Association of American Railroads (AAR) data.

Grain Transportation Indicators

Table 1

Grain Transport Cost Indicators[1]

	Truck	Rail		Barge	Ocean	
Week ending		Unit Train	Shuttle		Gulf	Pacific
03/11/15	198	243	200	203	143	128
03/04/15	197	248	198	218	139	121

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

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 2

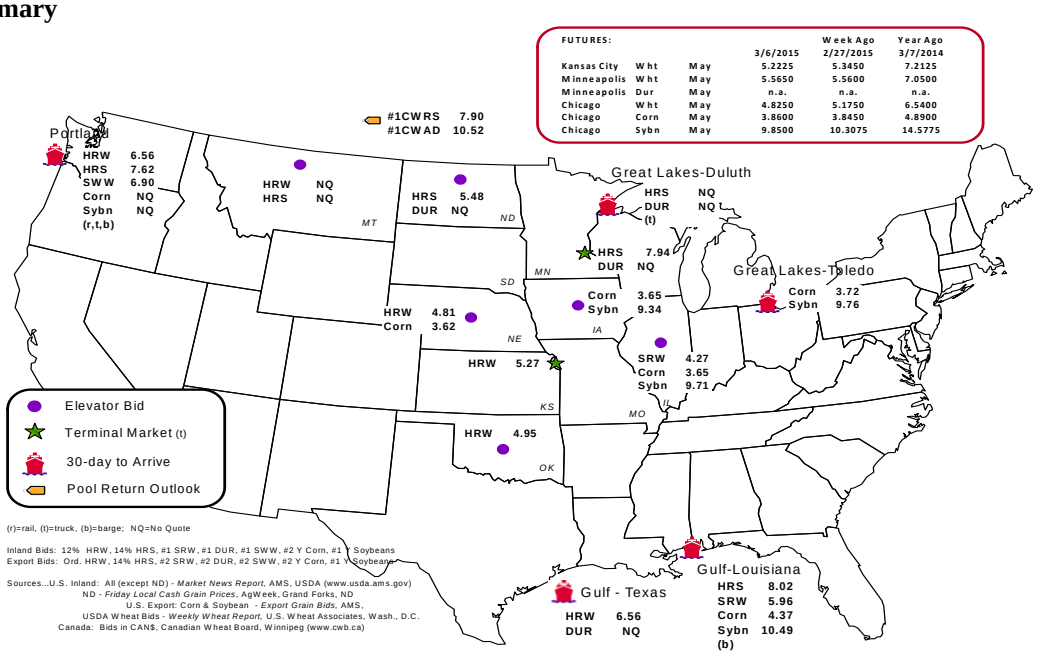
Market Update: U.S. Origins to Export Position Price Spreads ($/bushel)

Commodity	Origin--Destination	3/6/2015	2/27/2015
Corn	IL--Gulf	-0.72	-0.76
Corn	NE--Gulf	-0.75	-0.78
Soybean	IA--Gulf	-1.15	-1.32
HRW	KS--Gulf	-1.29	-1.30
HRS	ND--Portland	-2.14	-2.43

Note: nq = no quote
Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

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

Figure 1
Grain bid Summary



Rail Transportation

Table 3

Rail Deliveries to Port (carloads)[1]

Week ending	Mississippi Gulf	Texas Gulf	Pacific Northwest	Atlantic & East Gulf	Total	Week ending	Cross-Border Mexico[3]
3/04/2015[p]	412	544	5,405	578	6,939	2/28/2015	1,363
2/25/2015[r]	504	1,341	5,106	437	7,388	2/21/2015	1,562
2015 YTD[r]	7,348	9,281	49,386	7,722	73,737	2015 YTD	13,822
2014 YTD[r]	11,161	14,353	48,827	7,958	82,299	2014 YTD	15,062
2015 YTD as % of 2014 YTD	66	65	101	97	90	% change YTD	92
Last 4 weeks as % of 2014[2]	50	64	111	60	88	Last 4wks % 2014	90
Last 4 weeks as % of 4-year avg.[2]	75	80	126	85	108	Last 4wks % 4 yr	98
Total 2014	44,621	83,674	256,670	32,107	417,072	Total 2014	96,467
Total 2013	31,646	71,388	168,826	25,176	297,036	Total 2013	71,397

[1] Data is incomplete as it is voluntarily provided

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

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

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

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

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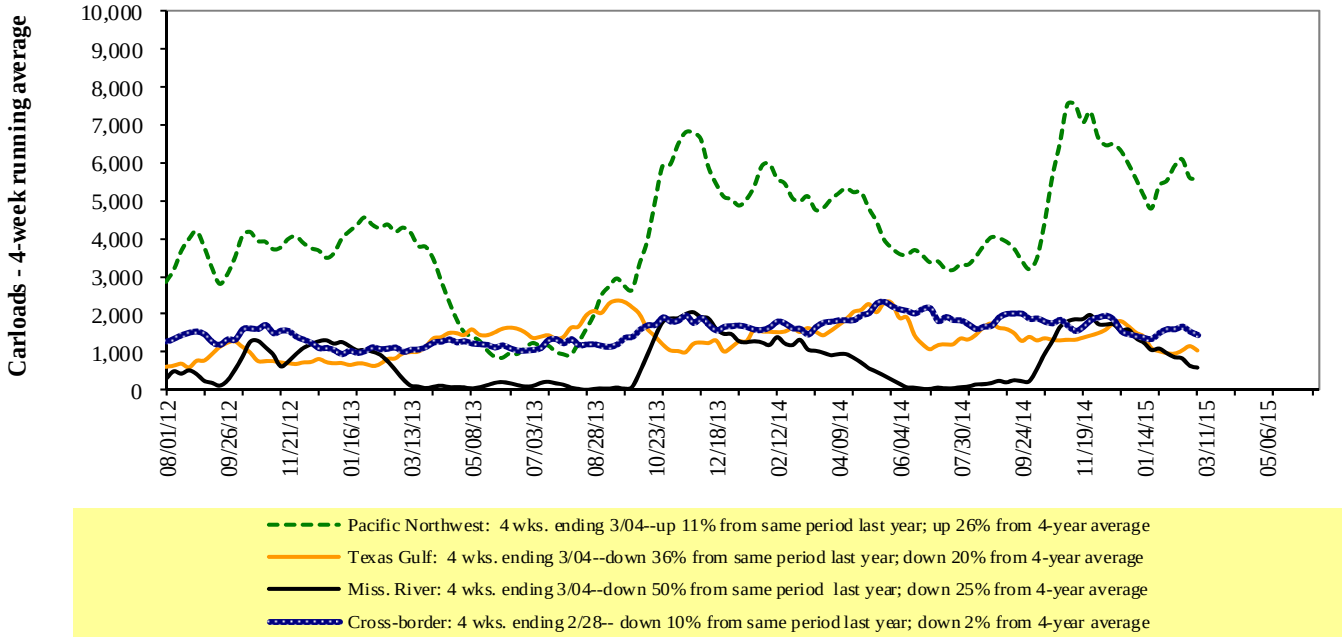
Railroads originate approximately 29 percent of U.S. grain shipments. Trends in these loadings are indicative of market conditions and expectations.

Figure 2

Rail Deliveries to Port



Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 4

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

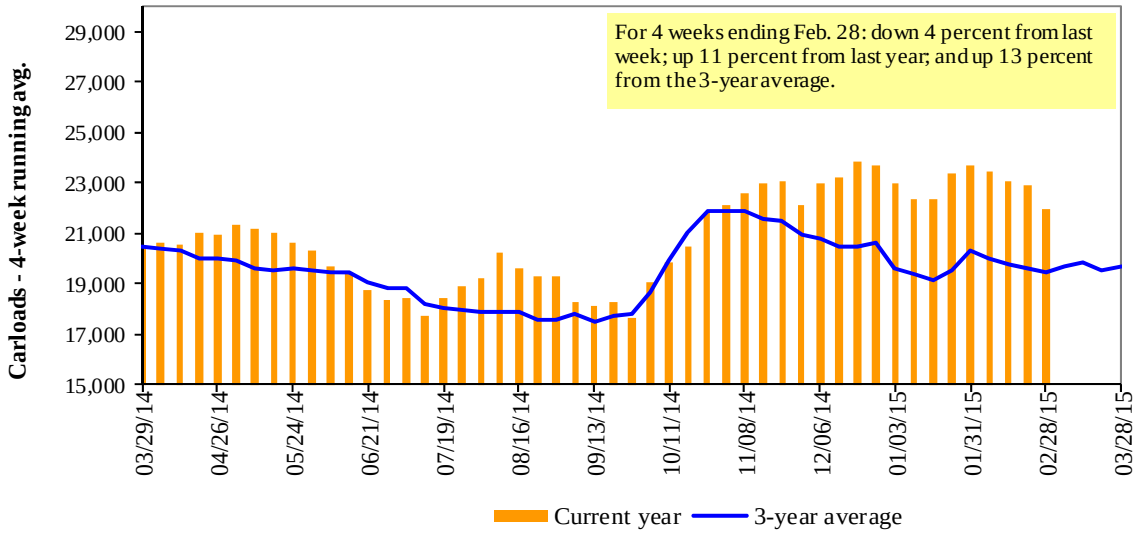
Week ending	East		West			U.S. total	Canada	
	CSXT	NS	BNSF	KCS	UP		CN	CP
02/28/15	1,572	2,805	9,789	580	5,791	20,537	4,249	4,101
This week last year	1,769	3,143	8,655	918	5,261	19,746	3,878	4,500
2015 YTD	17,941	24,485	87,104	6,545	46,430	182,505	32,920	34,991
2014 YTD	16,076	23,589	70,090	8,134	46,868	164,757	30,453	38,405
2015 YTD as % of 2014 YTD	112	104	124	80	99	111	108	91
Last 4 weeks as % of 2014[1]	100	99	125	85	103	111	108	89
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr avg.[2]	99	99	116	134	120	113	110	86
Total 2014	103,331	153,771	482,431	47,510	297,969	1,085,012	242,616	276,322

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

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

Figure 3

Total Weekly U.S. Class I Railroad Grain Car Loadings



Source: Association of American Railroads

Table 5

Railcar Auction Offerings[1] ($/car)[2]

Week ending	Delivery period							
3/5/2015	Mar-15	Mar-14	Apr-15	Apr-14	May-15	May-14	Jun-15	Jun-14
BNSF[3]								
COT grain units	no offer	no offer	no bids	no offer	no offer	no offer	no offer	no offer
COT grain single-car[5]	no offer	no offer	0 . . 27	no offer	no offer	no offer	no offer	no offer
UP[4]								
GCAS/Region 1	no offer	no offer	no bids	no offer	no bids	no bids	n/a	n/a
GCAS/Region 2	no offer	no offer	no bids	no offer	no bids	14	n/a	n/a

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

[2]Average premium/discount to tariff, last auction

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

[4]UP - GCAS = Grain Car Allocation System

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

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

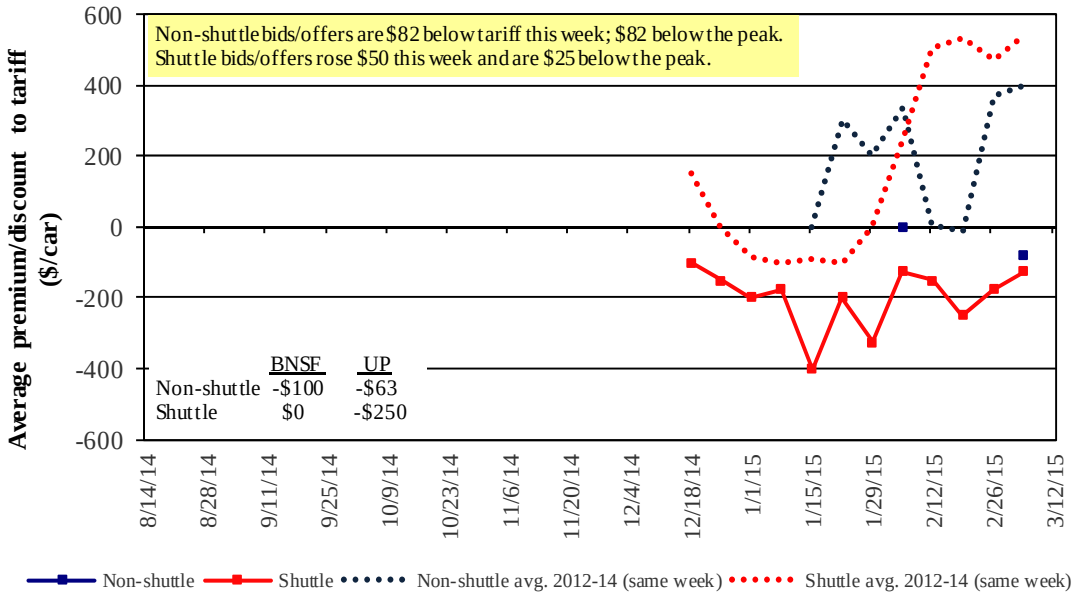
[5]Range is shown because average is not available. Not available = n/a.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA.

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

Figure 4

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

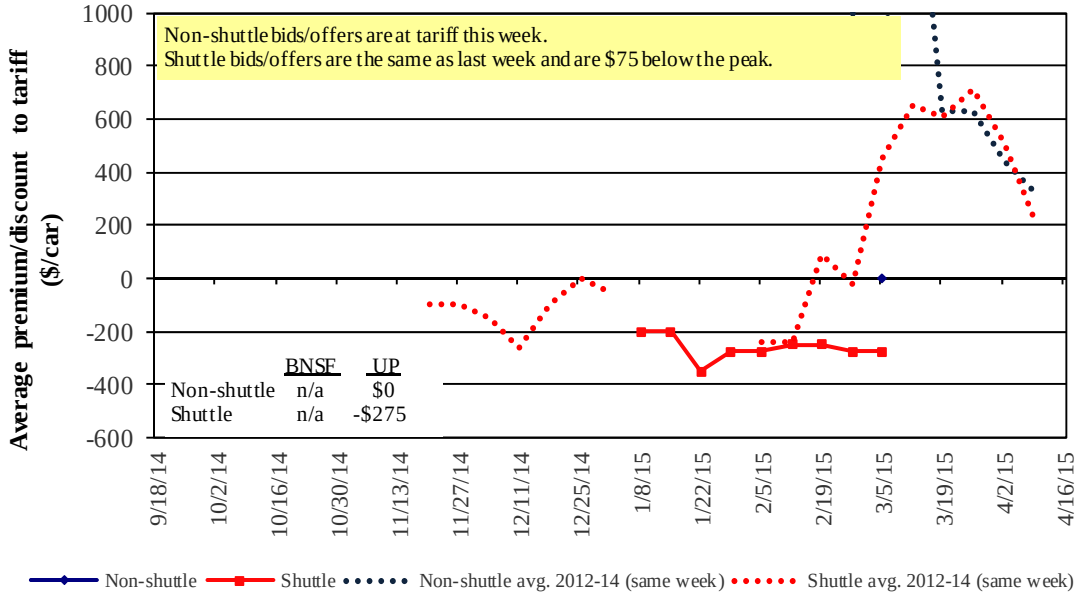


Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 5

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

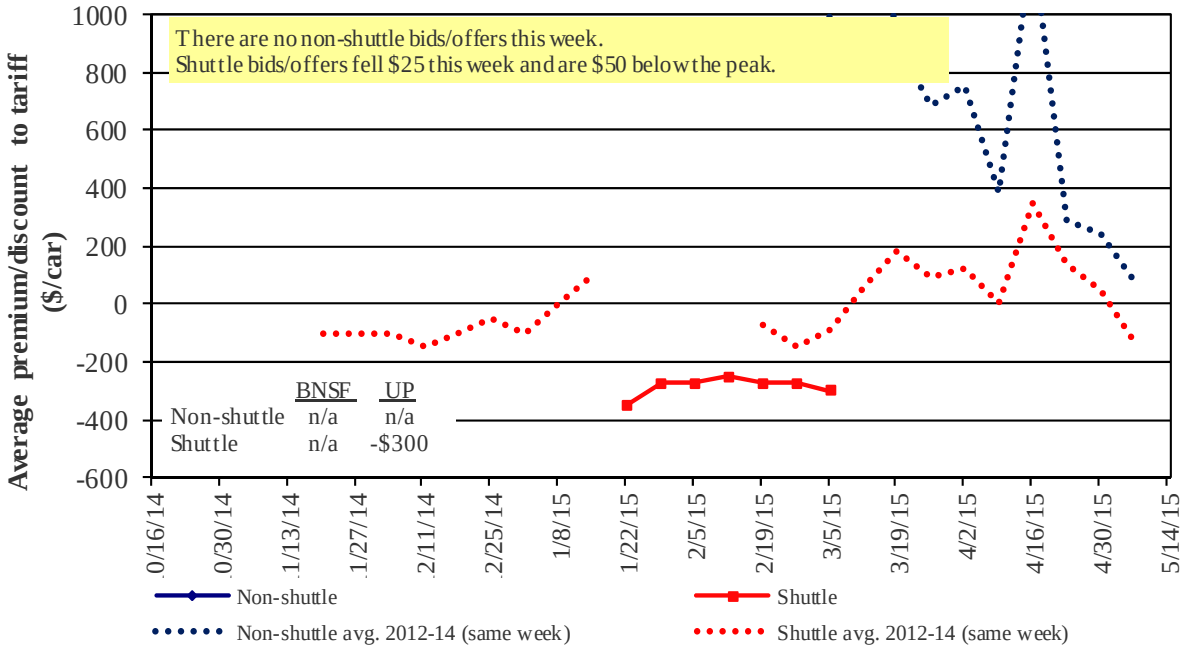


Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 6

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



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

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 6

Weekly Secondary Railcar Market ($/car)[1]

Week ending	Delivery period					
3/5/2015	Mar-15	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15
Non-shuttle						
BNSF-GF	(100)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2014	(1,700)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
UP-Pool	(63)	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2014	(863)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle[2]						
BNSF-GF	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2014	(3,875)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
UP-Pool	(250)	(275)	(300)	(300)	(275)	(275)
Change from last week	25	-	(25)	(25)	-	-
Change from same week 2014	(1,750)	(1,275)	(550)	n/a	(475)	n/a

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

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

Note: Bids listed are market INDICATORS only & are NOT guaranteed prices,
n/a = not available; GF = guaranteed freight; Pool = guaranteed pool

Sources: Transportation and Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

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

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

Table 7

Tariff Rail Rates for Unit and Shuttle Train Shipments[1]

Effective date: 3/1/2015	Origin region*	Destination region*	Tariff rate/car	Fuel surcharge per car	Tariff plus surcharge per: metric ton	Tariff plus surcharge per: bushel[2]	Percent change Y/Y[3]
Unit train							
Wheat	Wichita, KS	St. Louis, MO	$3,387	$91	$34.54	$0.94	3
	Grand Forks, ND	Duluth-Superior, MN	$3,596	$39	$36.09	$0.98	-2
	Wichita, KS	Los Angeles, CA	$6,244	$199	$63.98	$1.74	-5
	Wichita, KS	New Orleans, LA	$4,026	$160	$41.57	$1.13	1
	Sioux Falls, SD	Galveston-Houston, TX	$5,824	$163	$59.46	$1.62	-4
	Northwest KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	$4,293	$176	$44.37	$1.21	1
	Amarillo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	$4,492	$244	$47.03	$1.28	-1
Corn	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$3,328	$181	$34.85	$0.89	-1
	Toledo, OH	Raleigh, NC	$5,555	$217	$57.31	$1.46	13
	Des Moines, IA	Davenport, IA	$2,168	$38	$21.91	$0.56	2
	Indianapolis, IN	Atlanta, GA	$4,761	$163	$48.89	$1.24	13
	Indianapolis, IN	Knoxville, TN	$4,104	$104	$41.79	$1.06	15
	Des Moines, IA	Little Rock, AR	$3,308	$113	$33.97	$0.86	-1
	Des Moines, IA	Los Angeles, CA	$4,852	$328	$51.44	$1.31	-12
Soybeans	Minneapolis, MN	New Orleans, LA	$3,769	$179	$39.20	$1.07	0
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	$4,676	$154	$47.96	$1.31	21
	Indianapolis, IN	Raleigh, NC	$5,625	$218	$58.02	$1.58	13
	Indianapolis, IN	Huntsville, AL	$4,368	$104	$44.41	$1.21	25
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$3,974	$181	$41.26	$1.12	1
Shuttle Train							
Wheat	Great Falls, MT	Portland, OR	$3,678	$114	$37.66	$1.02	-5
	Wichita, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	$3,471	$89	$35.35	$0.96	-12
	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	$4,723	$203	$48.92	$1.33	14
	Grand Forks, ND	Portland, OR	$5,159	$198	$53.19	$1.45	-6
	Grand Forks, ND	Galveston-Houston, TX	$6,084	$206	$62.46	$1.70	-5
	Northwest KS	Portland, OR	$5,260	$288	$55.09	$1.50	-1
Corn	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$5,000	$241	$52.04	$1.32	-7
	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	$4,960	$220	$51.44	$1.31	-7
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$3,147	$181	$33.05	$0.84	-1
	Lincoln, NE	Galveston-Houston, TX	$3,510	$128	$36.13	$0.92	-6
	Des Moines, IA	Amarillo, TX	$3,690	$142	$38.05	$0.97	-1
	Minneapolis, MN	Tacoma, WA	$5,000	$239	$52.02	$1.32	-7
	Council Bluffs, IA	Stockton, CA	$4,400	$247	$46.15	$1.17	-8
Soybeans	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	$5,520	$220	$57.00	$1.55	-6
	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$5,530	$241	$57.31	$1.56	-7
	Fargo, ND	Tacoma, WA	$5,430	$196	$55.87	$1.52	-6
	Council Bluffs, IA	New Orleans, LA	$3,800	$209	$39.81	$1.08	-13
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	$3,851	$154	$39.77	$1.08	27
	Grand Island, NE	Portland, OR	$5,100	$295	$53.57	$1.46	-5

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

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

[3]Percentage change year over year calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surchage

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

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

Table 8

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

Effective date: 3/1/2015							
				Fuel	Tariff plus surcharge per:		Percent
Commodity	Origin state	Destination region	Tariff rate/car[1]	surcharge per car[2]	metric ton[3]	bushel[3]	change Y/Y[4]
Wheat	MT	Chihuahua, CI	$6,960	$209	$73.25	$1.99	4
	OK	Cuautitlan, EM	$6,565	$254	$69.67	$1.89	0
	KS	Guadalajara, JA	$7,010	$245	$74.13	$2.02	0
	TX	Salinas Victoria, NL	$3,885	$96	$40.68	$1.11	26
Corn	IA	Guadalajara, JA	$8,349	$288	$88.25	$2.24	-1
	SD	Celaya, GJ	$7,656	$274	$81.02	$2.06	-6
	NE	Queretaro, QA	$7,535	$256	$79.61	$2.02	-3
	SD	Salinas Victoria, NL	$5,880	$208	$62.20	$1.58	-5
	MO	Tlalnepantla, EM	$6,887	$249	$72.91	$1.85	-4
	SD	Torreon, CU	$6,922	$229	$73.07	$1.85	-3
Soybeans	MO	Bojay (Tula), HG	$8,261	$243	$86.89	$2.36	0
	NE	Guadalajara, JA	$8,872	$278	$93.49	$2.54	-1
	IA	El Castillo, JA	$9,155	$272	$96.32	$2.62	-2
	KS	Torreon, CU	$7,189	$173	$75.21	$2.04	0
Sorghum	TX	Guadalajara, JA	$7,253	$178	$75.93	$1.93	0
	NE	Celaya, GJ	$7,287	$248	$76.99	$1.95	-4
	KS	Queretaro, QA	$6,795	$156	$71.02	$1.80	-2
	NE	Salinas Victoria, NL	$5,500	$183	$58.06	$1.47	-3
	NE	Torreon, CU	$6,518	$204	$68.68	$1.74	-1

[1]Rates 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.

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

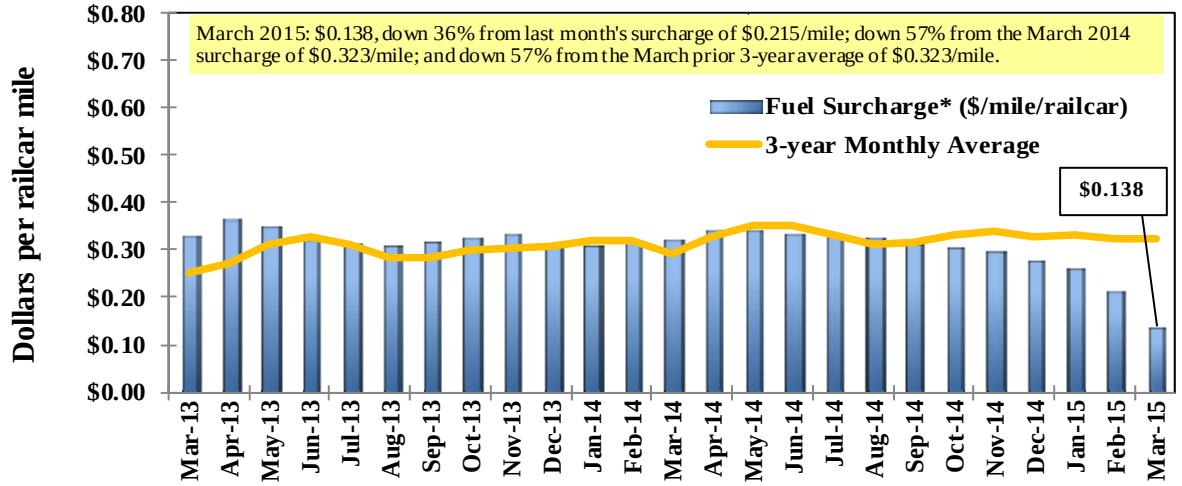
[3]Approximate load per car = 97.87 metric tons: Corn & Sorghum 56 lbs/bu, Wheat & Soybeans 60 lbs/bu

[4]Percentage change year over year calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surchage

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

Figure 7

Railroad Fuel Surcharges, North American Weighted Average[1]



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

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

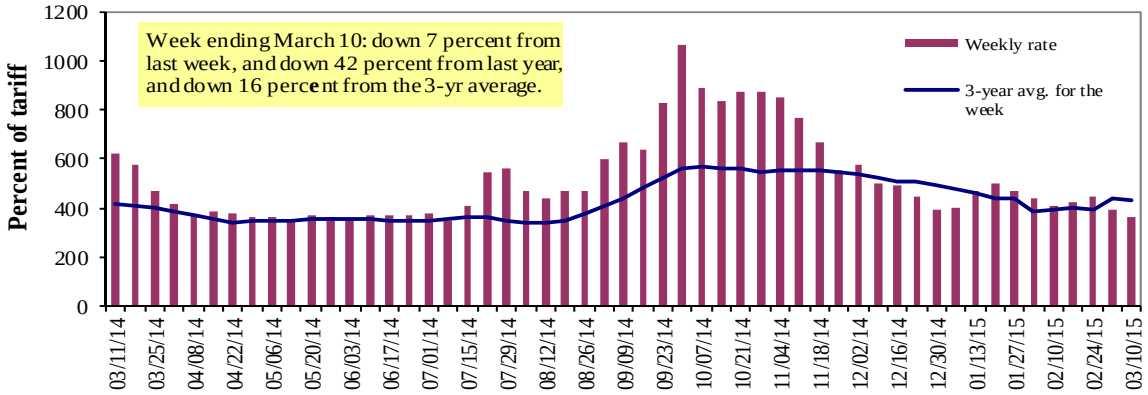
** BNSF strike price (diesel price when fuel surcharges begin) changed from $1.25/gal. to $2.50/gal starting March 1, 2011. As a result, the weighted average fuel surcharge for March 2011 was $0.227/mile instead of $0.331/mile.

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

Barge Transportation

Figure 8

Illinois River Barge Freight Rate[1,2]



[1]Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); [2]4-week moving average of the 3-year average.
Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 9

Weekly Barge Freight Rates: Southbound Only

		Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Lower Illinois River	St. Louis	Cincinnati	Lower Ohio	Cairo-Memphis
Rate[1]	3/10/2015	-	-	365	250	255	255	198
	3/3/2015	-	-	393	270	292	292	200
$/ton	3/10/2015	-	-	16.94	9.98	11.96	10.30	6.22
	3/3/2015	-	-	18.24	10.77	13.69	11.80	6.28
Current week % change from the same week:								
	Last year	-	-	-42	-58	-58	-58	-61
	3-year avg. [2]	-	-	-16	-29	-30	-30	-29
Rate[1]	April	398	340	330	240	245	245	198
	June	388	330	325	235	243	243	198

[1]Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); [2]4-week moving average; ton = 2,000 pounds
Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 9
Benchmark tariff rates

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

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

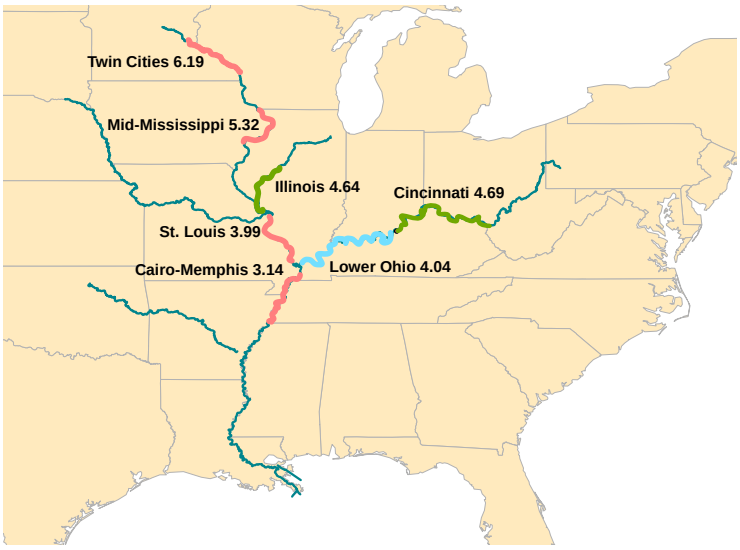
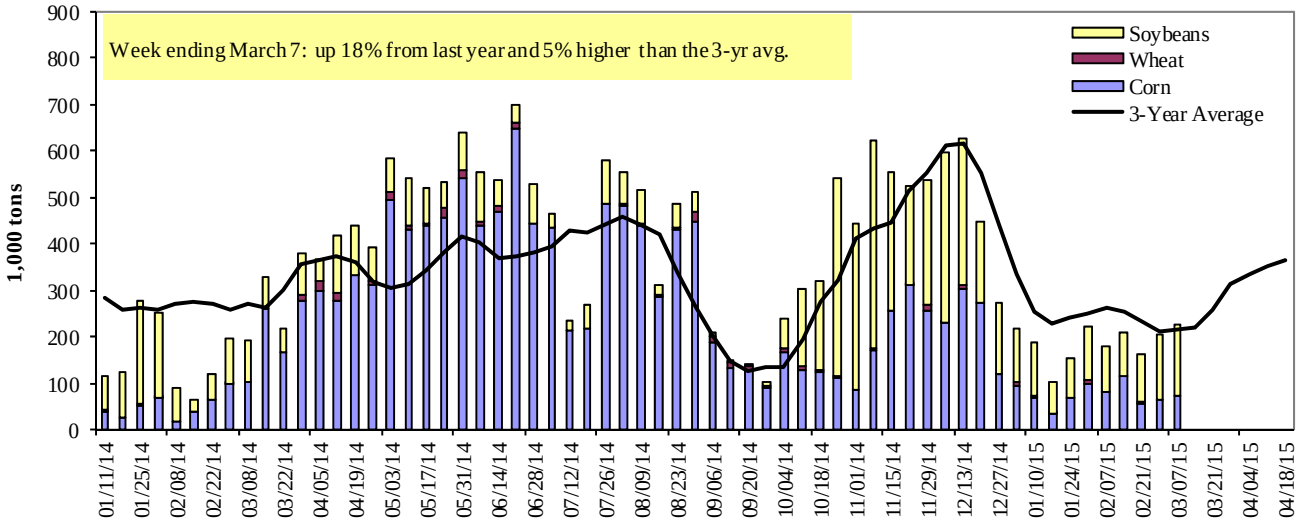


Figure 10

Barge Movements on the Mississippi River[1] (Locks 27 - Granite City, IL)



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

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Table 10

Barge Grain Movements (1,000 tons)

Week ending 03/7/2015	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River					
Rock Island, IL (L15)	0	0	0	0	0
Winfield, MO (L25)	0	0	0	0	0
Alton, IL (L26)	54	0	134	0	188
Granite City, IL (L27)	72	0	154	0	226
Illinois River (L8)	72	5	109	0	185
Ohio River (L52)	171	9	71	0	251
Arkansas River (L1)	0	8	29	0	38
Weekly total - 2015	243	17	254	0	514
Weekly total - 2014	330	28	164	0	522
2015 YTD[1]	2,292	180	2,549	43	5,064
2014 YTD	2,300	186	2,640	34	5,160
2015 as % of 2014 YTD	100	97	97	125	98
Last 4 weeks as % of 2014[2]	79	72	128	90	97
Total 2014	20,693	2,181	11,813	258	34,946

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

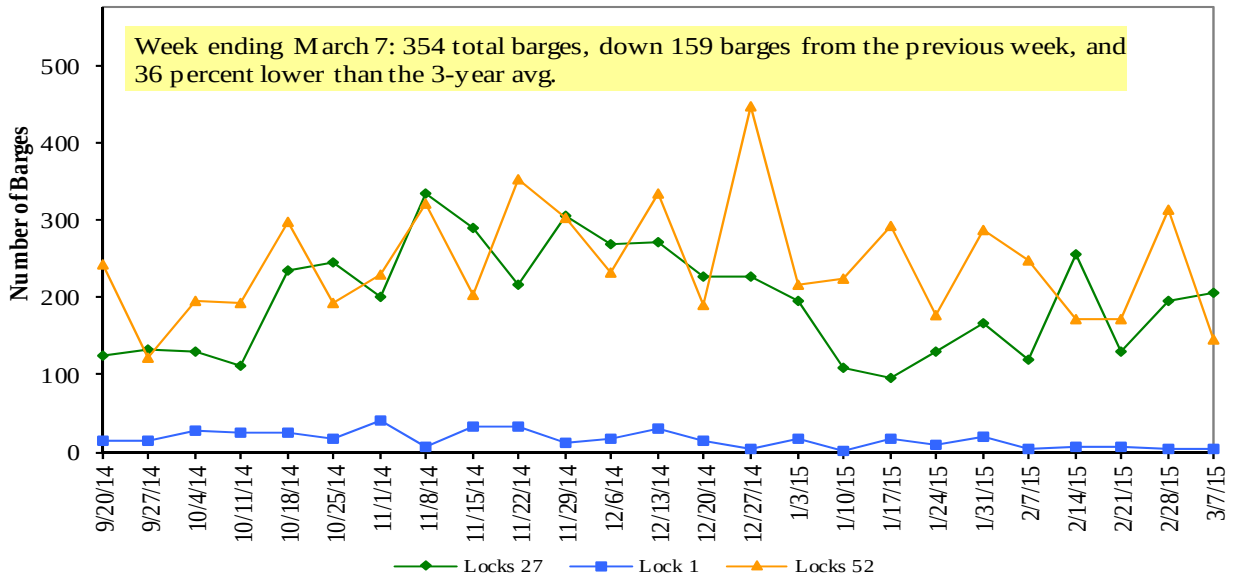
[2] As a percent of same period in 2014.

Note: Total may not add exactly, due to rounding

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Figure 11

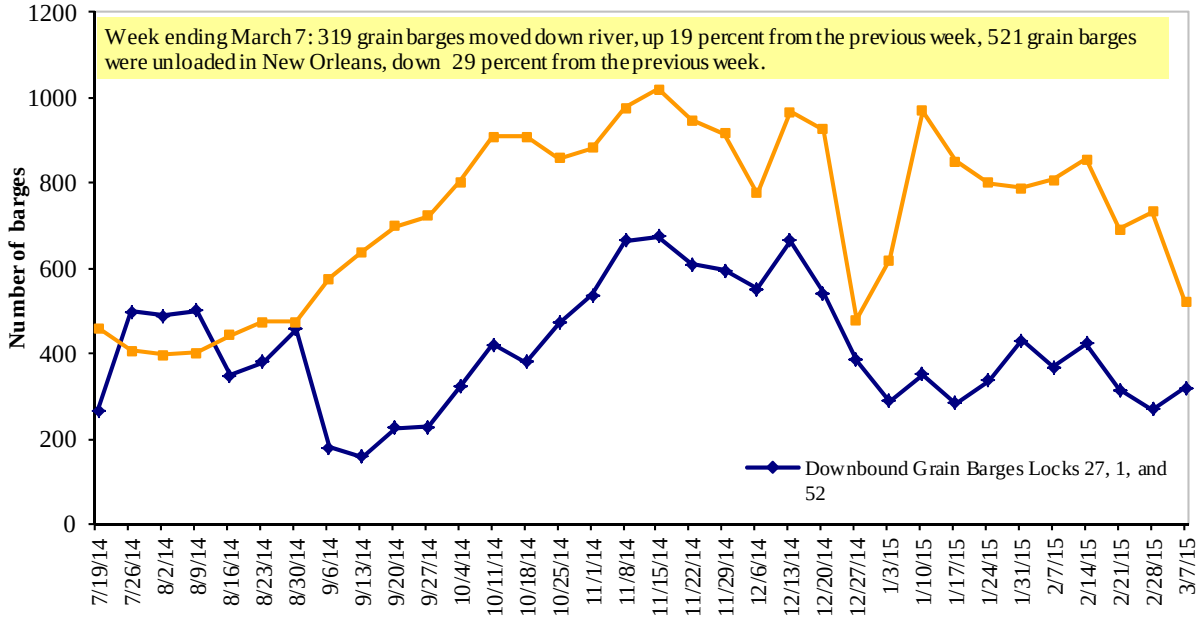
Upbound Empty Barges Transiting Mississippi River Locks 27, Arkansas River Lock and Dam 1, and Ohio River Locks and Dam 52



Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Figure 12

Grain Barges for Export in New Orleans Region



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

Truck Transportation

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

Table 11

Retail on-Highway Diesel Prices[1], Week Ending 03/09/2014 (US $/gallon)

			Change from	
Region	**Location**	**Price**	**Week ago**	**Year ago**
I	East Coast	3.105	0.022	-1.053
	New England	3.332	0.041	-1.030
	Central Atlantic	3.333	0.040	-1.020
	Lower Atlantic	2.884	0.004	-1.090
II	Midwest[2]	2.852	0.002	-1.161
III	Gulf Coast[3]	2.795	-0.001	-1.019
IV	Rocky Mountain	2.801	0.022	-1.199
V	West Coast	3.096	-0.001	-0.946
	West Coast less California	2.926	-0.008	-1.034
	California	3.233	0.004	-0.879
Total	U.S.	2.944	0.008	-1.077

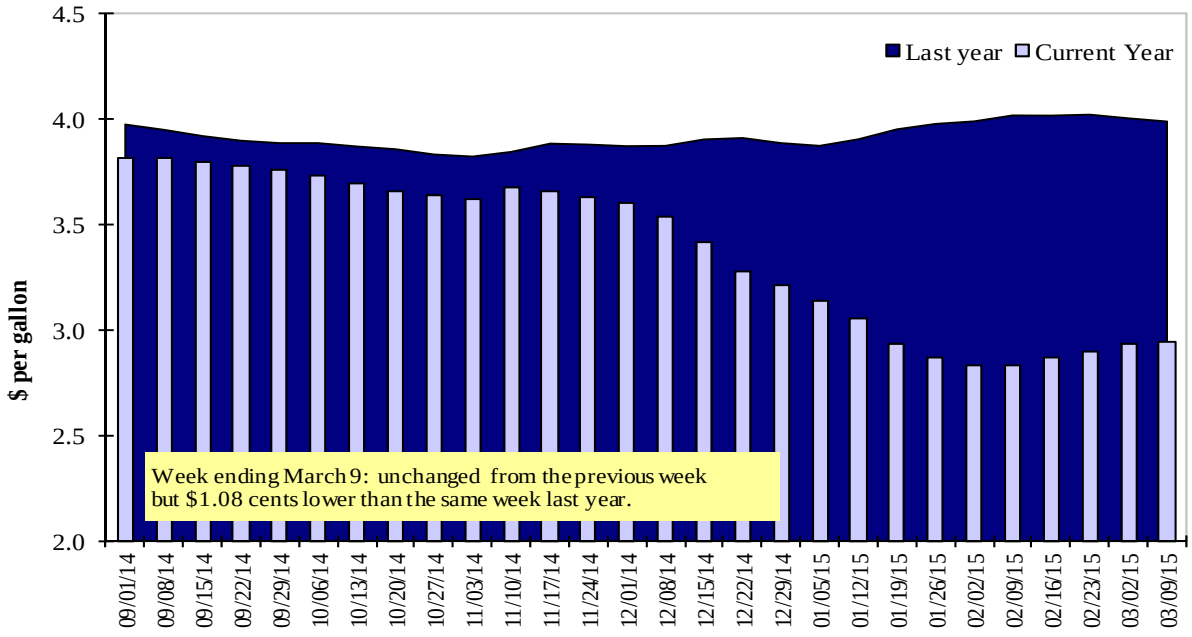
[1]Diesel fuel prices include all taxes. Prices represent an average of all types of diesel fuel.

[2]Same as North Central [3]Same as South Central

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

Figure 13

Weekly Diesel Fuel Prices, U.S. Average



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

Grain Exports

Table 12

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

	Wheat						Corn	Soybeans	Total
Week ending	HRW	SRW	HRS	SWW	DUR	All wheat			
Export Balances[1]									
2/26/2015	1,730	718	1,651	766	141	5,006	16,745	6,275	28,026
This week year ago	1,770	984	1,660	1,032	163	5,608	19,201	6,984	31,793
Cumulative exports-marketing year[2]									
2014/15 YTD	5,083	2,796	5,446	2,972	506	16,802	18,883	41,346	77,031
2013/14 YTD	8,996	6,242	4,461	3,019	311	23,029	18,329	37,182	78,540
YTD 2014/15 as % of 2013/14	57	45	122	98	163	73	103	111	98
Last 4 wks as % of same period 2013/14	90	77	105	88	79	92	89	100	92
2013/14 Total	11,465	7,307	6,338	4,367	486	29,963	46,868	44,478	121,309
2012/13 Total	10,019	5,039	5,825	4,619	591	26,093	17,980	36,220	80,293

[1] Current unshipped export sales to date

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

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

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

Table 13

Top 5 Importers[1] of U.S. Corn

Week ending 02/26/2015	Total Commitments[2] 2014/15 Current MY	2013/14 Last MY	% change current MY from last MY	Exports[3] 3-year avg 2011-2013
	- 1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
Japan	7,457	8,168	(9)	10,079
Mexico	8,549	8,825	(3)	8,145
Korea	2,099	1,948	8	2,965
Colombia	2,864	1,821	57	3,461
Taiwan	1,082	1,041	4	1,238
Top 5 Importers	**22,051**	**21,803**	**1**	**25,887**
Total US corn export sales	**35,627**	**37,531**	**(5)**	**34,445**
% of Projected	78%	77%		
Change from prior week	828	1,518		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	62%	58%		75%
USDA forecast, March 2015	**45,720**	**48,700**	**(6)**	
Corn Use for Ethanol USDA forecast, March 2015	**132,080**	**130,404**	**1**	

(n) indicates negative number.

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

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

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

Table 14

Top 5 Importers[1] of U.S. Soybeans

Week Ending 02/26/2015	Total Commitments[2] 2014/15 Current MY	2013/14 Last MY	% change current MY from last MY	Exports[3] 3-yr avg. 2011-13
	- 1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
China	29,671	27,833	7	24,211
Mexico	2,595	2,693	(4)	2,971
Indonesia	1,342	1,773	(24)	1,895
Japan	1,497	1,492	0	1,750
Taiwan	1,109	961	15	1,055
Top 5 importers	**36,214**	**34,752**	**4**	**31,882**
Total US soybean export sales	**47,621**	**44,166**	**8**	**39,169**
% of Projected	98%	99%		
Change from prior week*	499	774		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	76%	79%		**81%**
USDA forecast, March 2015	**48,720**	**44,820**	**9**	

(n) indicates negative number.

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

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

[3] FAS Marketing Year Final Reports - www.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/myfi_rpt.htm. (Carryover plus Accumulated Exports)

* Includes revisions to previous week's data.

Table 15

Top 10 Importers[1] of All U.S. Wheat

Week Ending 02/26/2015	Total Commitments[2] 2014/15 Current MY	2013/14 Last MY	% change current MY from last MY	Exports[3] 3-yr avg 2011-2013
	- 1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
Japan	2,872	2,613	10	3,243
Mexico	2,496	2,784	(10)	3,066
Nigeria	1,906	2,397	(20)	2,960
Philippines	2,095	1,769	18	2,006
China	263	4,259	(94)	1,830
Brazil	1,508	3,881	(61)	1,617
Korea	1,197	1,179	1	1,552
Taiwan	905	867	4	969
Indonesia	566	755	(25)	813
Colombia	549	720	(24)	610
Top 10 importers	**14,358**	**21,223**	(32)	**18,665**
Total US wheat export sales	**21,809**	**28,637**	**(24)**	**27,696**
% of Projected	89%	89%		
Change from prior week*	470	556		
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	66%	74%		67%
USDA forecast, March 2015	**24,490**	**32,010**	**(23)**	

(n) indicates negative number.

[1] Based on FAS Marketing Year Ranking Reports - www.fas.usda.gov; Marketing year = Jun 1 - May 31.

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

[3] FAS Marketing Year Final Reports - www.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/myfi_rpt.htm.

Table 16

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

Port regions	Week ending 03/05/15	Previous Week[1]	Current Week as % of Previous	2015 YTD[1]	2014 YTD[1]	2015 YTD as % of 2014 YTD	Last 4-weeks as % of 2014	Last 4-weeks as % of 3-yr. avg.	Total[1] 2014
Pacific Northwest									
Wheat	257	273	94	2,262	1,778	127	139	119	12,436
Corn	445	246	181	1,414	897	158	182	199	7,781
Soybeans	69	216	32	2,907	3,123	93	61	66	12,887
Total	**772**	**735**	**105**	**6,583**	**5,797**	**114**	**111**	**110**	**33,104**
Mississippi Gulf									
Wheat	40	67	61	610	682	89	90	45	4,495
Corn	589	896	66	4,977	4,113	121	109	144	30,912
Soybeans	440	379	116	7,458	7,241	103	73	108	29,087
Total	**1,070**	**1,341**	**80**	**13,045**	**12,036**	**108**	**88**	**115**	**64,495**
Texas Gulf									
Wheat	74	99	75	483	1,078	45	42	49	6,120
Corn	0	0	n/a	121	111	109	0	0	580
Soybeans	0	0	n/a	182	254	72	50	199	949
Total	**74**	**99**	**75**	**786**	**1,444**	**54**	**41**	**50**	**7,649**
Interior									
Wheat	24	36	67	213	181	118	61	120	1,400
Corn	121	103	117	957	857	112	101	104	5,677
Soybeans	62	66	93	828	816	101	119	84	4,312
Total	**207**	**206**	**100**	**1,998**	**1,854**	**108**	**109**	**97**	**11,389**
Great Lakes									
Wheat	0	0	n/a	12	0	n/a	n/a	5,891	935
Corn	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	0	288
Soybeans	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	0	988
Total	**0**	**0**	**n/a**	**12**	**0**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**1,934**	**2,211**
Atlantic									
Wheat	5	28	18	64	31	205	201	110	553
Corn	0	0	n/a	0	18	0	0	0	816
Soybeans	79	19	409	684	702	97	52	103	2,119
Total	**84**	**47**	**178**	**748**	**751**	**100**	**61**	**100**	**3,487**
U.S. total from ports[2]									
Wheat	401	503	80	3,644	3,750	97	101	85	25,939
Corn	1,155	1,246	93	7,469	5,996	125	119	144	46,054
Soybeans	650	680	96	12,059	12,136	99	69	94	50,342
Total	**2,207**	**2,429**	**91**	**23,172**	**21,882**	**106**	**90**	**107**	**122,335**

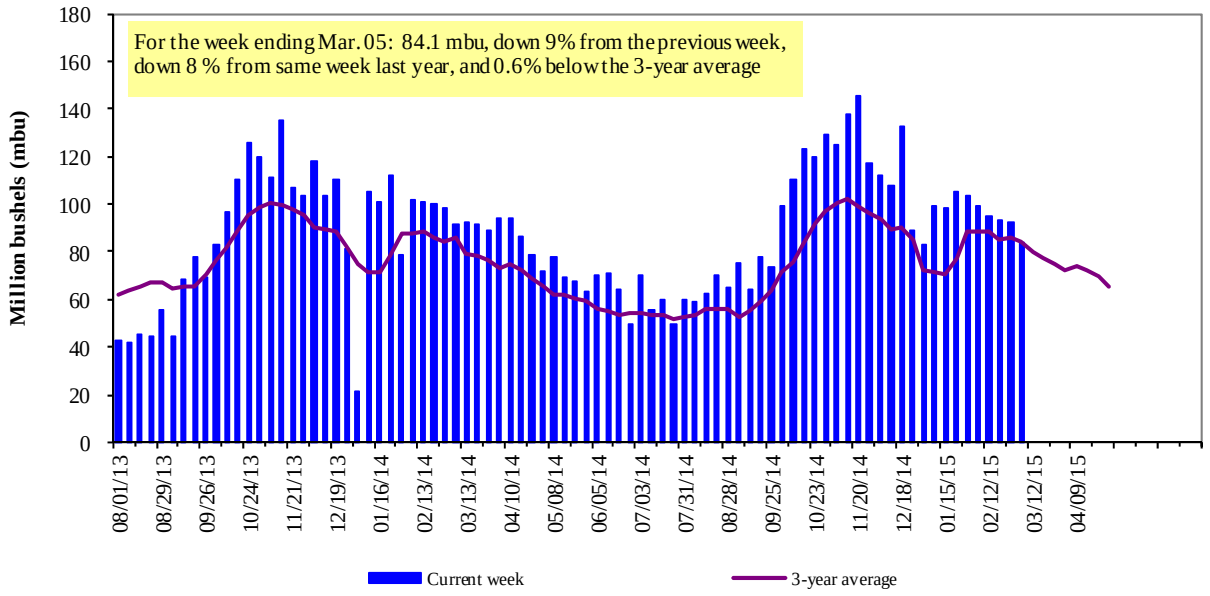
[1] Data includes revisions from prior weeks; some regional totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

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

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

Figure 14

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

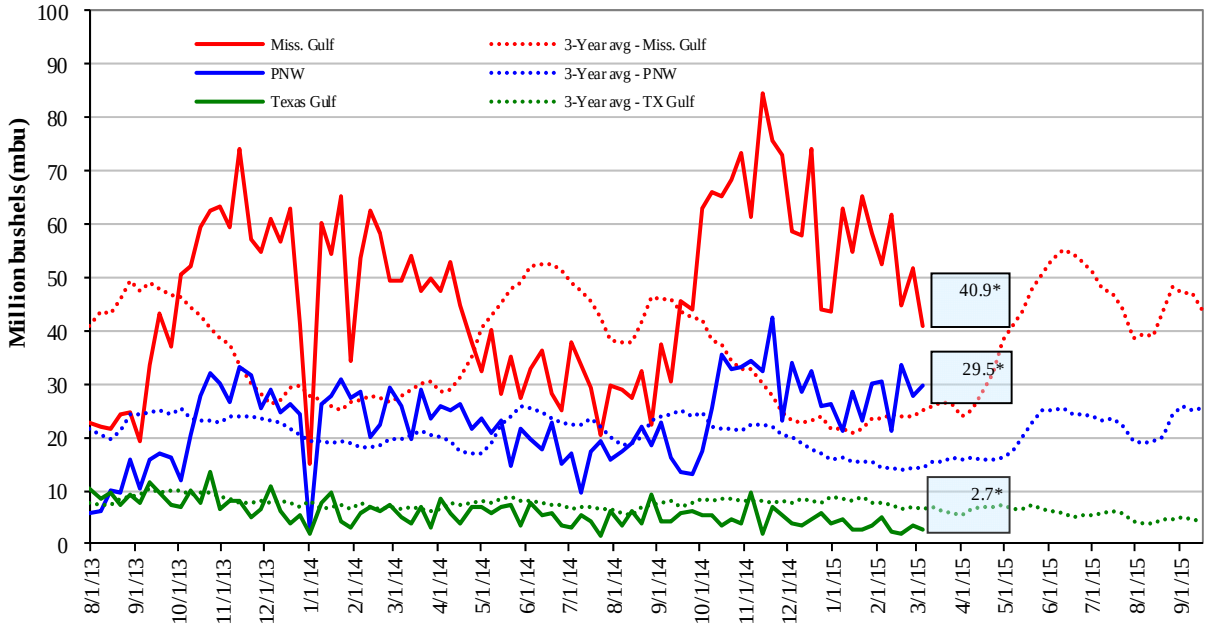


Source: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration/USDA (www.gipsa.usda.gov)

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

Figure 15

U.S. Grain Inspections: U.S. Gulf and PNW[1] (wheat, corn, and soybeans)



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

Mar. 5: % change from:	MS Gulf	TX Gulf	U.S. Gulf	PNW
Last week	down 21	down 26	down 21	up 7
Last year (same week)	down 18	down 47	down 20	up 15
3-yr avg. (4-wk mov. avg.	down 5	down 49	down 10	up 18

Ocean Transportation

Table 17

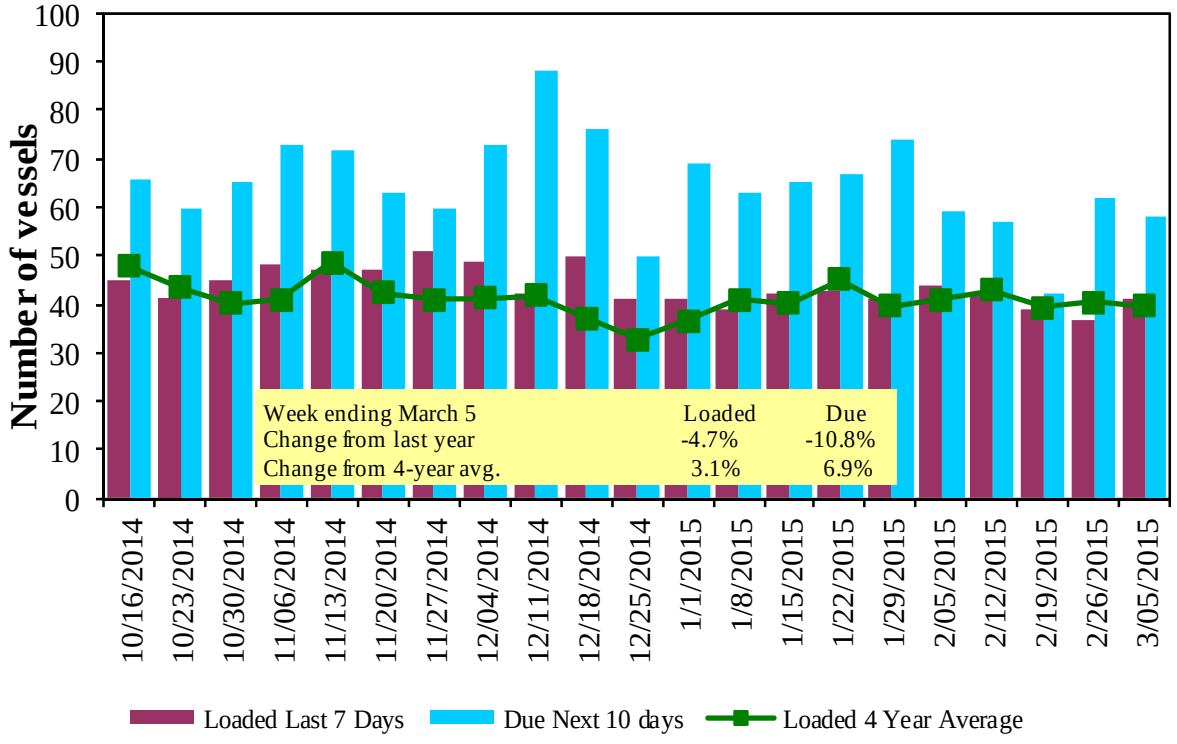
Weekly Port Region Grain Ocean Vessel Activity (number of vessels)

	Gulf			Pacific Northwest	Vancouver B.C.
Date	In port	Loaded 7-days	Due next 10-days	In port	In port
3/5/2015	33	41	58	20	n/a
2/26/2015	41	37	62	18	n/a
2014 range	(18..88)	(24..52)	(27..97)	(6..26)	n/a
2014 avg.	46	39	59	15	n/a

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 16

U.S. Gulf[1] Vessel Loading Activity

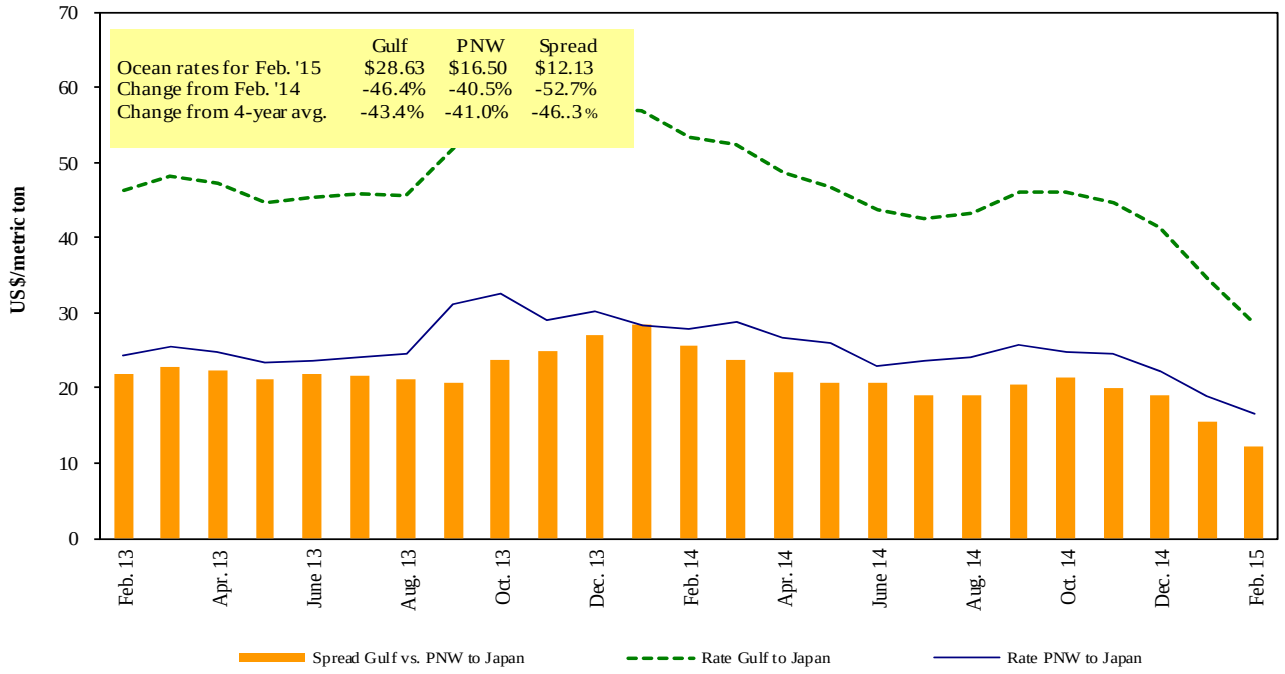


Source:Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

[1]U.S. Gulfincludes Mississippi, Texas, and East Gulf.

Figure 17

Grain Vessel Rates, U.S. to Japan



Data Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting

Table 18

Ocean Freight Rates For Selected Shipments, Week Ending 3/7/2015

Export region	Import region	Grain types	Loading date	Volume loads (metric tons)	Freight rate (US$/metric ton)
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Mar 5/14	58,000	30.75
U.S. Gu;f	China	Heavy Grain	Feb 13/22	60,000	28.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Feb 15/20	55,000	25.50
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Feb 10/20	55,000	25.50
U.S. Gulf	Cameroon[1]	Sorghum	Mar 16/26	7,960	136.16
U.S. Gulf	S. Africa[1]	Sorghum	Mar 16/26	5,000	136.16
U.S. Gulf	Tanzania[1]	Wheat	Mar 16/26	12,000	136.16
PNW	China	Grain	Mar 16/25	60,000	15.25
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Jun 1/30	60,000	22.75
Brazil	China	Grain	Apr 15/May 31	60,000	24.50
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Mar 25/Apr 4	60,000	21.50
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Mar 17/26	60,000	21.00
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Mar 13/22	60,000	21.00
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Mar 10/15	60,000	21.50
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Mar 3/8	60,000	20.50
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Feb 25/ Mar 5	60,000	23.25
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Feb 25/ Mar 5	60,000	21.25
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Feb 25/ Mar 5	60,000	21.75
River Plate	Dominican Republic	Soybean Meal	Mar 1/7	30,000	24.00
River Plate	Egypt	Soybeans	Feb 15/20	25,000	21.50
River Plate	South Africa	Soybean Meal	Feb 20/24	25,000	18.75
Russia	Saudi Arabia	Barley	Ma5 5/12	70,000	16.50

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

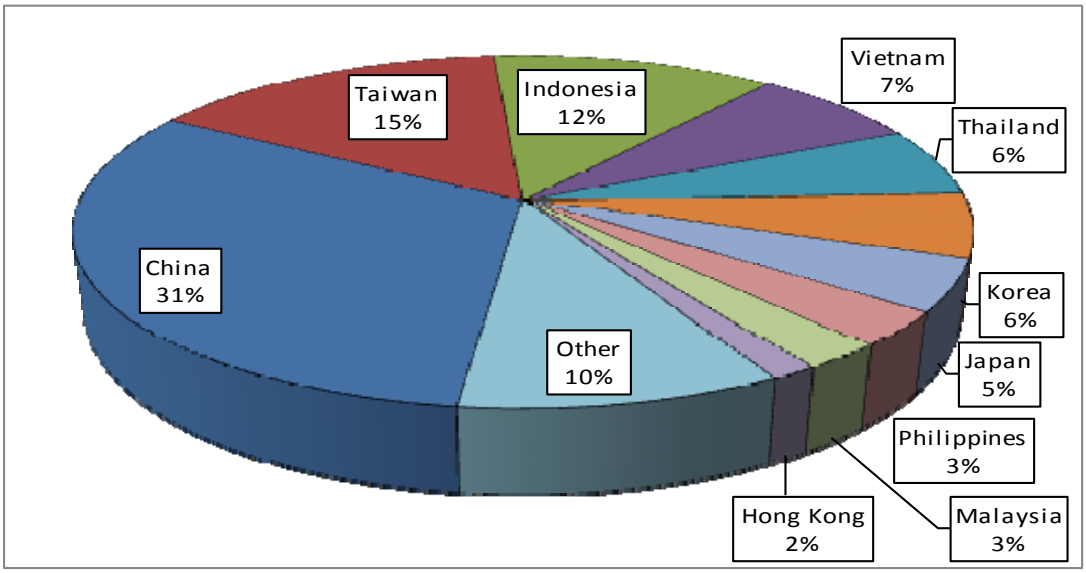
[1]50 percent of food aid from the United States is required to be shipped on U.S.-flag vessels.

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

In 2013, containers were used to transport 10 percent of total U.S. waterborne grain exports, up 2 percentage points from 2012. Approximately 61 percent of U.S. waterborne grain exports in 2013 went to Asia, of which 16 percent were moved in containers. Asia is the top destination for U.S. containerized grain exports—97 percent in 2013.

Figure 18

Top 10 Destination Markets for U.S. Containerized Grain Exports, January-December 2014

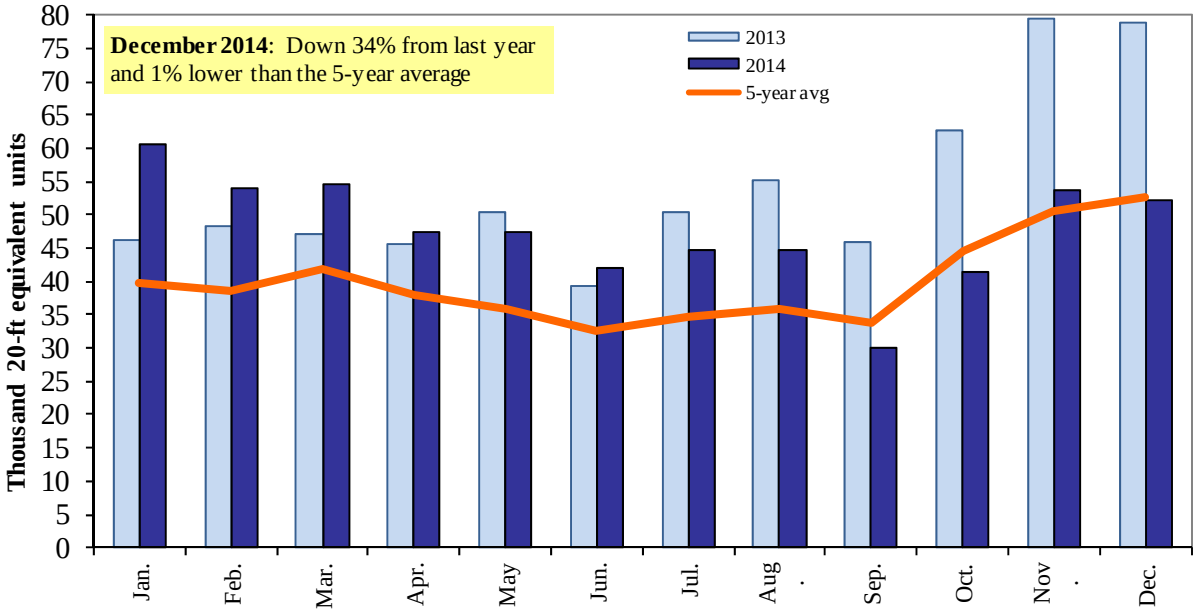


Source: USDA/Agricultural Marketing Service/Transportation Services Division analysis of Port Import Export Reporting Service (PIERS) data

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

Figure 19

Monthly Shipments of Containerized Grain to Asia



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

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

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