A weekly publication of the
Transportation and Marketing Programs/Transportation Services Division
www.ams.usda.gov/GTR

Dec 30, 2010

Contents

The next release is January 6, 2010

Contact Us

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

FMCSA Issues Proposed Rule on Hours-of-Service Requirements for Commercial Truck Drivers

On December 29, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) published a Federal Register notice of proposed rulemaking regarding truck drivers' maximum hours of service and their required off-duty time. The proposed rule would provide flexibility for drivers to take breaks when needed, limit drivers to 10 or 11 hours of driving time, and allow 13 hours on-duty time within a 14-hour window for driving. It would allow the window to be extended to 16 hours twice a week to allow for loading and unloading delays, some of which could be counted as off-duty time. Drivers will be able to restart their work week once every 7 days after taking 34 consecutive hours off-duty, including two periods between midnight and 6 a.m. Comments may be filed by February 28 and viewed at http://www.regulations.gov, under docket ID number FMCSA-2004-19608. The statutory limited agricultural exemption will be unaffected by the rulemaking.

Washington State to Acquire More Grain Railcars, Will Benefit Eastern Washington Growers

The Washington State Department of Transportation is acquiring 29 more covered hopper railcars for the State's Grain Train program. Prior to this purchase, the Grain Train program had 118 covered hopper railcars. Eastern Washington grain growers use the cars to transport their wheat to deepwater ports along the Columbia River and Puget Sound for delivery to Pacific Rim markets.

Average Diesel Fuel Prices Jump 5 Cents per Gallon

During the week ending December 27, U.S. average **diesel fuel prices** increased 5 cents per gallon to $3.29—1.4 percent higher than the previous week and 20.6 percent higher than the same week last year. Continued rising crude oil prices and strong demand for petroleum products have pushed diesel prices to the highest level so far this year. According to the latest EIA *Short-Term Energy Outlook*, higher crude oil prices combined with higher refiner margins could push 2011 annual average diesel fuel prices to $3.23 per gallon compared with an average 2.99 per gallon in 2010.

Weekly Export Inspections of Corn Climb; Soybeans and Wheat Retreat

For the week ending December 23, **export inspections of corn** (.806 million metric tons (mmt)) surpassed last week's pace by 30 percent, resulting in the year-to-date total 5 percent higher than last year at this time. This increase, however, was not enough to offset a drop in wheat and soybean inspections. Total inspections of grain (corn, wheat, and soybeans) from all major U.S. export regions (1.89 mmt) decreased 17 percent from the previous week and 26 from the same week last year. For the week ending December 16, weekly export sales of corn (.906 mmt) were also strong—12 percent higher than the previous week and 18 percent above the prior 4-week average. Total **unshipped grain export balances** were 25 percent higher than last year at this time, indicating continued strong transportation demand.

Snapshots by Sector

Rail

U.S. railroads originated 24,475 **carloads of grain** during the week ending December 18, up 5 percent from last week, up 3 percent from last year, and 9 percent higher than the 3-year average.

During the week ending December 25, average January non-shuttle **secondary railcar bids/offers** were $6 below tariff, down $18.50 from last week. Average shuttle rates were $200 below tariff, down $195.50 from last week.

Ocean

During the week ending December 23, 44 **ocean-going grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf, up 7.3 percent from last year. Forty-six vessels are expected to be loaded in the U.S. Gulf within the next 10 days, down 20.7 percent from last year.

During the week ending December 24, the cost of shipping grain from the Gulf to Japan averaged $52.00 per mt, unchanged from the previous week. The rate from the Pacific Northwest to Japan was $27 per mt, down 7 percent from the previous week.

Barge

During the week ending December 25, **barge grain movements** totaled 859,800 tons, 21 percent higher than the previous week, and 45 percent higher than the same period last year.

Containerized Grain Exports

In October, **containerized grain exports to Asia** were 42 percent higher than the previous year, 15 percent higher than the 3-year average, and 108 percent higher than September movements.

Feature Article/Calendar

To Our Readers:

The USDA *Grain Transportation Report* (GTR) team offers you analytical insights on the latest developments in agricultural markets and their implications to your supply chain management decisions. We put into context domestic and global market developments that may affect agricultural transportation, while recognizing that the U.S. agricultural commodity markets are highly competitive, fast paced, and evolving.

Reflecting on the year, several key events highlighted the intersection of agricultural markets, transportation, and Government policies. Some of the top 2010 stories that illustrate this relationship included:

- The recovery from the worst global recession since World War II increased U.S. demand for transportation and for U.S agricultural products.
- Record soybean and near-record corn crops, harvested at near-record speed, put periodic pressure on the transportation systems.
- Atypical for harvest time, commodity prices remained high, in part because of strong export demand.
- The Russian grain export ban boosted U.S. wheat exports and prices.
- Unshipped export balances remain high at the end of this calendar year despite fairly strong grain export inspections, indicating continued demand for transportation of grain.
- Transportation costs were mixed:
    - Rail fuel surcharges were less volatile than in the past but the Russian grain export ban increased prices and volatility in the secondary railcar markets
    - Barge rates followed their typical seasonal pattern
    - Ocean rates reacted to volatile shipping demand from China, a surplus of vessel capacity, projected record soybean exports, and the Russian grain export ban
    - Truck rates remained competitive, falling slightly from the high during the first quarter
    - Fuel costs remained stable until the last quarter, when diesel prices increased rapidly as crude oil prices surged
- No disruptions to grain exports occurred in spite of the worst oil spill in U.S. history.
- Congress held hearings regarding vessel capacity and equipment availability, funding for inland waterways and harbor maintenance, and the federal role in national rail policy as it relates to Surface Transportation Board reauthorization—all relevant to agricultural transportation concerns.

In April, we released a comprehensive USDA/DOT ***Study of Rural Transportation Issues*** mandated by the 2008 Farm Bill. In October, we improved the reporting of ***rail tariff rates***. Numerous feature articles with insightful analysis ranged in topics from quarterly transportation cost indicators to the transportation implications of the ***market carry***.

As we look forward to 2011, demand for U.S. agricultural commodities remains strong, raising the importance of an efficient and reliable transportation system once again. We are thankful for our many blessings and look forward to providing you with uninterrupted weekly reports to help make informed marketing and transportation decisions. We appreciate and thank the many industry and Government representatives who regularly and voluntarily provide us with the necessary information and data included in this report. We wish you a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,
The Grain Transportation Report Team

Grain Transportation Indicators

Table 1

Grain Transport Cost Indicators[1]

Week ending	Truck	Rail[2]	Barge	Ocean Gulf	Ocean Pacific
12/29/10	221	83	268	233	191
12/22/10	218	108	288	233	206

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

[2]The rail indicator is not an index. It is the difference between the nearby secondary rail market bid for this week and the average bid for year 2000 (+) 100.
Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 2

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

Commodity	Origin--Destination	12/24/2010	12/17/2010
Corn	IL--Gulf	-0.68	-0.73
Corn	NE--Gulf	-0.85	-0.92
Soybean	IA--Gulf	-1.26	-1.27
HRW	KS--Gulf	-1.41	-1.42
HRS	ND--Portland	-4.28	-4.75

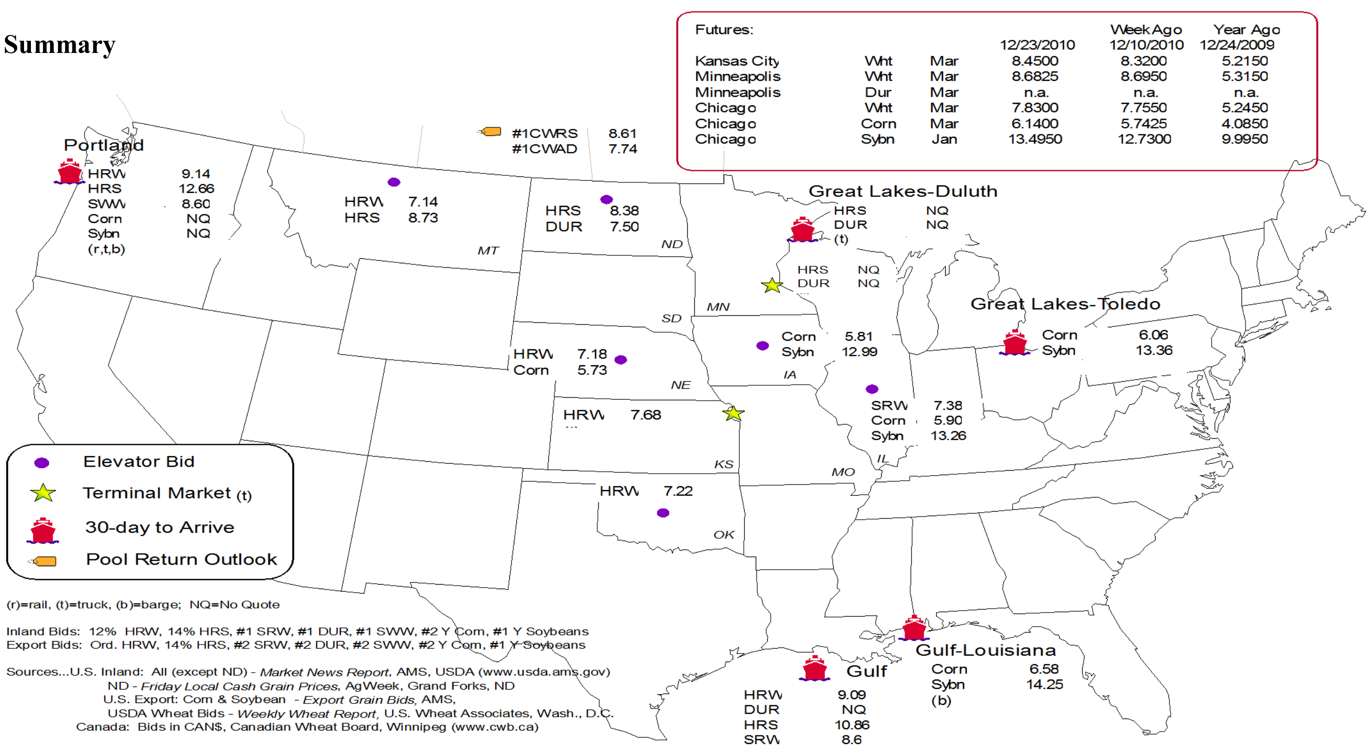
Note: nq = no quote

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	Cross-Border Mexico	Pacific Northwest	Atlantic & East Gulf	Total
12/22/2010^p	1,107	1,602	678	3,870	978	8,235
12/15/2010^r	1,075	1,911	500	3,894	596	7,976
2010 YTD	32,876	81,338	42,181	174,715	32,344	363,454
2009 YTD	33,146	56,578	36,438	173,570	29,669	329,401
2010 YTD as % of 2009 YTD	99	144	116	101	109	110
Last 4 weeks as % of 2009[2]	143	120	95	96	67	101
Last 4 weeks as % of 4-year avg.[2]	95	109	88	96	96	97
Total 2009	33,423	57,646	36,738	175,965	30,328	334,100
Total 2008	68,768	107,542	37,491	255,852	33,028	502,681

[1] Data is incomplete as it is voluntarily provided

[2] Compared with same 4-weeks in 2009 and prior 4-year average.

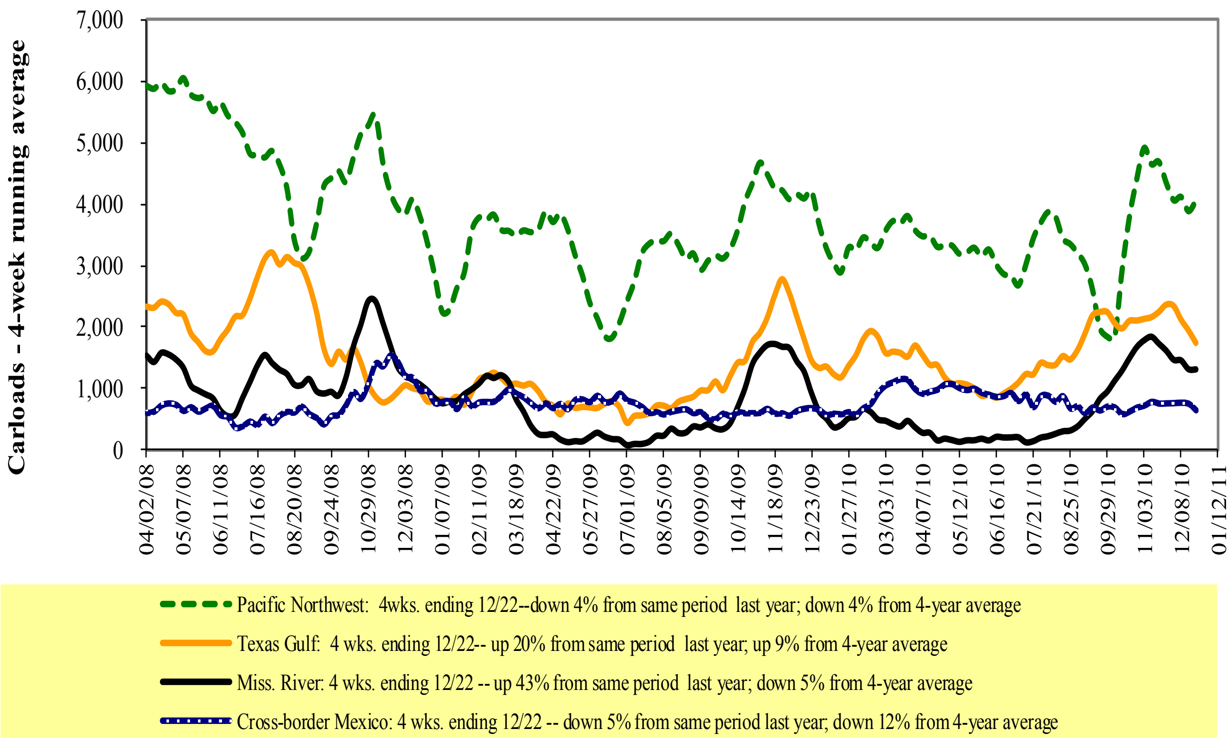
YTD = year-to-date; p = preliminary data; r = revised data; n/a = not available

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Railroads originate approximately 35 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)

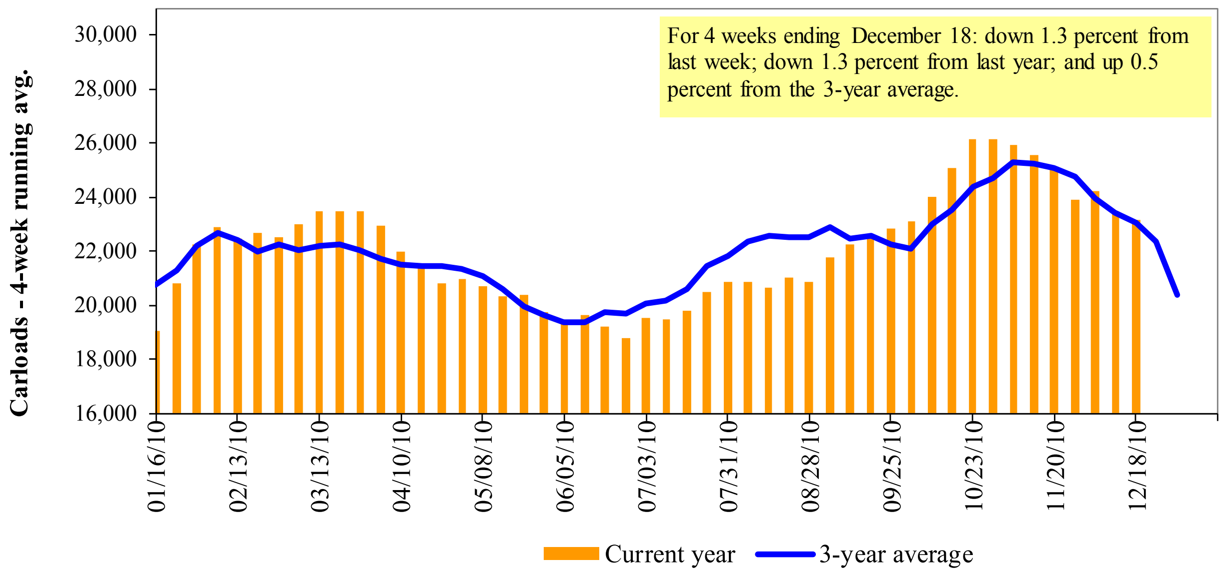
	East		West			U.S. total	Canada	
Week ending	**CSXT**	**NS**	**BNSF**	**KCS**	**UP**		**CN**	**CP**
12/18/10	1,685	3,094	12,506	675	6,515	24,475	4,274	4,683
This week last year	2,574	3,905	10,799	724	5,855	23,857	3,287	5,187
2010 YTD	107,415	154,246	528,636	34,937	284,724	1,109,958	196,735	257,649
2009 YTD	102,087	137,888	467,722	36,009	260,338	1,004,044	195,154	272,131
2010 YTD as % of 2009 YTD	105	112	113	97	109	111	101	95
Last 4 weeks as % of 2009[1]	94	92	102	92	99	99	115	92
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr avg.	84	99	103	92	105	100	96	89
Total 2009	105,278	142,254	483,618	36,912	268,811	1,036,873	200,871	278,997

[1]As a percent of the same period in 2009 and the prior 3-year average. YTD = year-to-date.

Source: Association of American Railroads (www.aar.org)

Figure 3

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



Source: Association of American Railroads

Table 5

Rail Car Auction Offerings[1] ($/car)[2]

Week ending	**Delivery period**							
12/25/2010	**Jan-11**	**Jan-10**	**Feb-11**	**Feb-10**	**Mar-11**	**Mar-10**	**Apr-11**	**Apr-10**
BNSF[3]								
COT grain units	no offer	6	no offer	0	4	no bids	no bids	0
COT grain single-car[5]	no bids	0 . . 20	no bids	0 . . 1	no bids	0	no bids	0
UP[4]								
GCAS/Region 1	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids	n/a	n/a
GCAS/Region 2	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids	no bids	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.

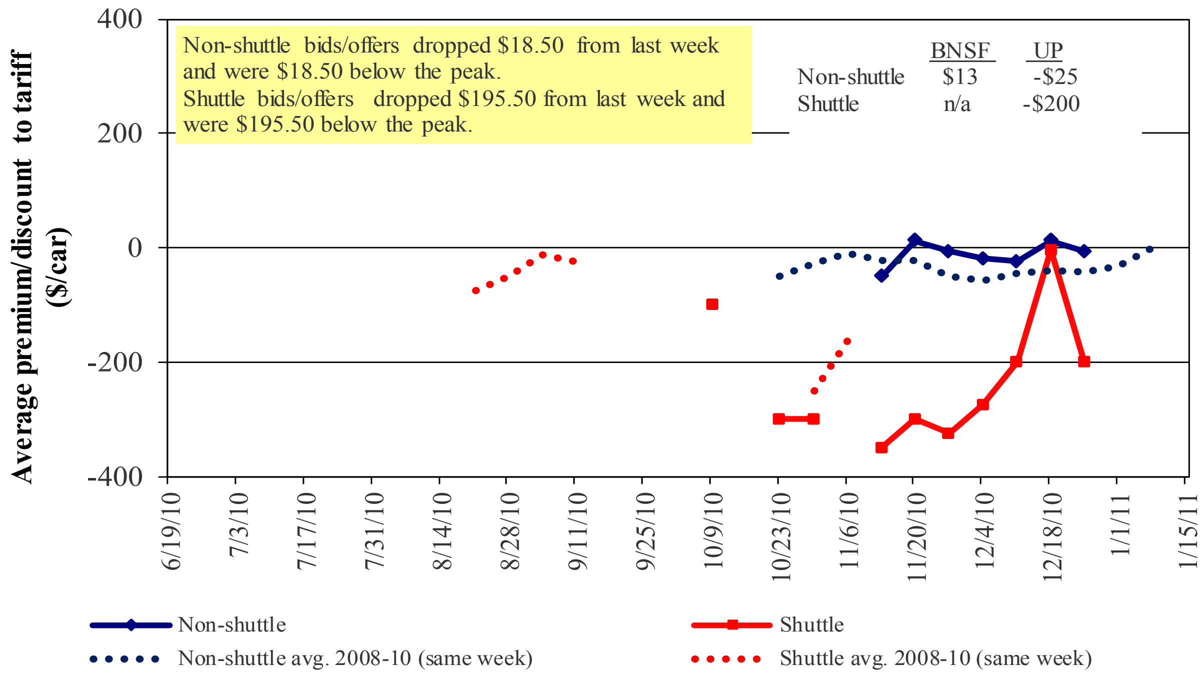
[5]Range is shown because average is not available. Not available = n/a.

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 January 2011, Secondary Market

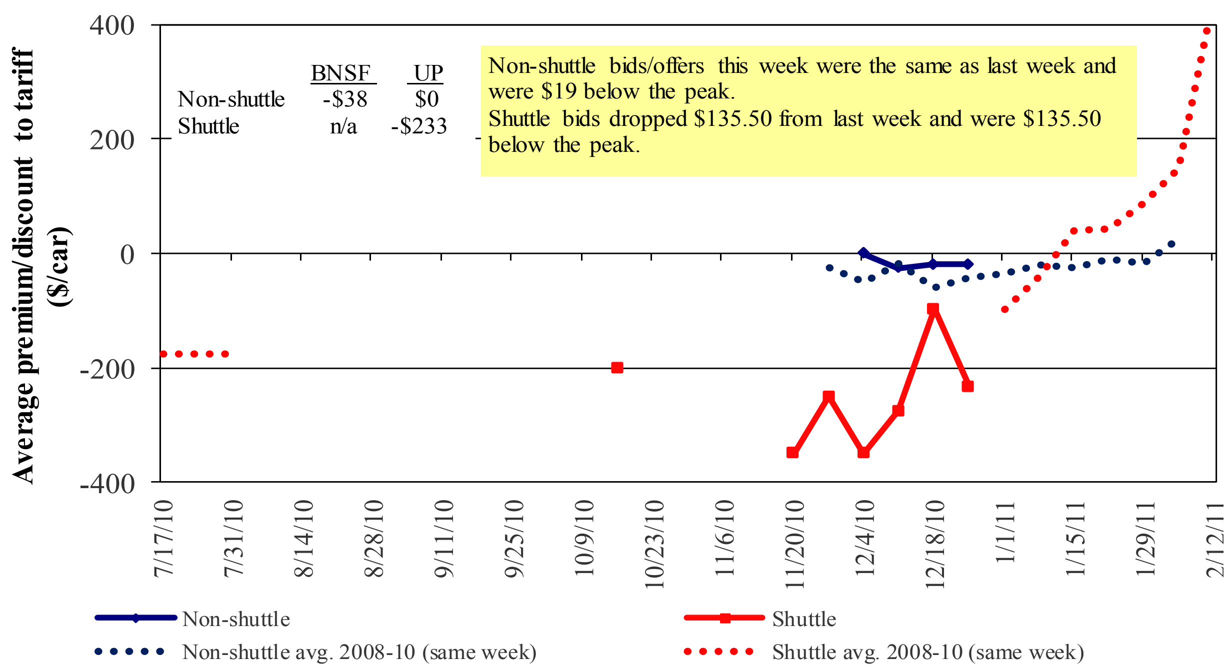


Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 5

Bids/Offers for Railcars to be Delivered in February 2011, Secondary Market

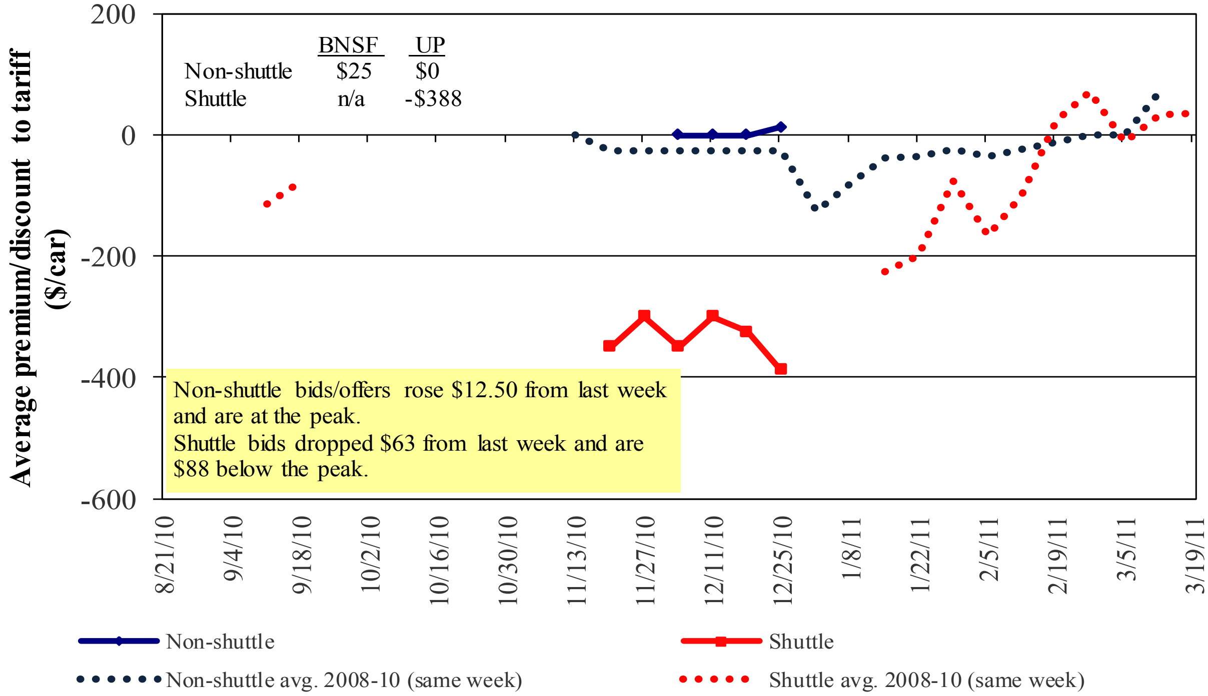


Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 6

Bids/Offers for Railcars to be Delivered in March 2011, 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 Rail Car Market ($/car)[1]

Week ending	Delivery period					
12/25/2010	**Jan-11**	**Feb-11**	**Mar-11**	**Apr-11**	**May-11**	**Jun-11**
Non-shuttle						
BNSF-GF	13	(38)	25	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	(37)	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2009	(33)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
UP-Pool	(25)	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2009	(8)	50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle[2]						
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 2009	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
UP-Pool	(200)	(233)	(388)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from last week	(91)	-	(63)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Change from same week 2009	(275)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	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 Atwood/ConAgra, Harvest States Co-op, James B. Joiner Co., Tradewest Brokerage Co.

Table 7

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

Effective date: 12/6/2010	Origin region*	Destination region*	Tariff rate/car	Fuel surcharge per car	Tariff plus surcharge per: metric ton	bushel[2]
Unit train						
Wheat	Wichita, KS	St. Louis, MO	$2,774	$101	$28.55	$0.78
	Grand Forks, ND	Duluth-Superior, MN	$2,563	$137	$26.81	$0.73
	Wichita, KS	Los Angeles, CA	$5,047	$704	$57.11	$1.55
	Wichita, KS	New Orleans, LA	$3,275	$178	$34.29	$0.93
	Sioux Falls, SD	Galveston-Houston, TX	$4,981	$578	$55.20	$1.50
	Northwest KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	$3,543	$195	$37.12	$1.01
	Amarillo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	$3,742	$271	$39.86	$1.08
Corn	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$2,812	$201	$29.92	$0.81
	Toledo, OH	Raleigh, NC	$3,760	$234	$39.66	$1.08
	Des Moines, IA	Davenport, IA	$1,843	$43	$18.72	$0.51
	Indianapolis, IN	Atlanta, GA	$3,196	$176	$33.48	$0.91
	Indianapolis, IN	Knoxville, TN	$2,760	$113	$28.53	$0.78
	Des Moines, IA	Little Rock, AR	$2,938	$125	$30.42	$0.83
	Des Moines, IA	Los Angeles, CA	$4,372	$365	$47.04	$1.28
Soybeans	Minneapolis, MN	New Orleans, LA	$3,381	$194	$35.50	$0.97
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	$2,921	$166	$30.66	$0.83
	Indianapolis, IN	Raleigh, NC	$3,830	$235	$40.37	$1.10
	Indianapolis, IN	Huntsville, AL	$2,613	$113	$27.07	$0.74
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$3,156	$201	$33.34	$0.91
Shuttle Train						
Wheat	Great Falls, MT	Portland, OR	$2,868	$405	$32.50	$0.88
	Wichita, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	$2,867	$315	$31.60	$0.86
	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	$3,497	$219	$36.90	$1.00
	Grand Forks, ND	Portland, OR	$4,131	$699	$47.97	$1.31
	Grand Forks, ND	Galveston-Houston, TX	$5,046	$728	$57.34	$1.56
	Northwest KS	Portland, OR	$4,510	$320	$47.96	$1.31
Corn	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$4,120	$851	$49.37	$1.34
	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	$4,120	$780	$48.66	$1.32
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$2,677	$201	$28.58	$0.78
	Lincoln, NE	Galveston-Houston, TX	$2,880	$454	$33.11	$0.90
	Des Moines, IA	Amarillo, TX	$3,330	$157	$34.63	$0.94
	Minneapolis, MN	Tacoma, WA	$4,120	$845	$49.30	$1.34
	Council Bluffs, IA	Stockton, CA	$3,480	$874	$43.23	$1.18
Soybeans	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	$4,320	$780	$50.64	$1.38
	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$4,270	$851	$50.86	$1.38
	Fargo, ND	Tacoma, WA	$4,270	$693	$49.29	$1.34
	Council Bluffs, IA	New Orleans, LA	$3,510	$232	$37.16	$1.01
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	$2,536	$166	$26.83	$0.73
	Grand Island, NE	Portland, OR	$4,520	$327	$48.14	$1.31

[1]A unit train refers to shipments of at least 25 cars. Shuttle train rates are available for qualified shipments of 90-110 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: 12/6/2010				Fuel			Percent
	Origin		Tariff	surcharge	Tariff plus surcharge per:		change
Commodity	state	Destination region	rate/car[1]	per car[2]	metric ton[3]	bushel[3]	Y/Y[4]
Wheat	MT	Chihuahua, CI	$6,705	$740	$76.07	$2.07	9
	OK	Cuautitlan, EM	$6,026	$587	$67.56	$1.84	7
	KS	Guadalajara, JA	$6,705	$851	$77.20	$2.10	10
	TX	Salinas Victoria, NL	$3,397	$197	$36.72	$1.00	11
Corn	IA	Guadalajara, JA	$7,000	$865	$80.37	$2.04	8
	SD	Penjamo, GJ	$6,520	$968	$76.51	$1.94	3
	NE	Queretaro, QA	$6,240	$586	$69.75	$1.77	3
	SD	Salinas Victoria, NL	$4,785	$736	$56.41	$1.43	7
	MO	Tlalnepantla, EM	$5,428	$570	$61.29	$1.56	4
	SD	Torreon, CU	$5,610	$811	$65.60	$1.66	7
Soybeans	MO	Bojay (Tula), HG	$6,103	$738	$69.90	$1.90	3
	NE	Guadalajara, JA	$6,860	$835	$78.62	$2.14	9
	IA	El Castillo	$6,830	$962	$79.61	$2.16	5
	KS	Torreon, CU	$5,565	$546	$62.44	$1.70	9
Sorghum	OK	Cuautitlan, EM	$4,729	$735	$55.83	$1.42	11
	TX	Guadalajara, JA	$5,670	$630	$64.37	$1.63	8
	NE	Penjamo, GJ	$6,565	$775	$75.00	$1.90	4
	KS	Queretaro, QA	$5,628	$450	$62.10	$1.58	5
	NE	Salinas Victoria, NL	$4,500	$463	$50.70	$1.29	5
	NE	Torreon, CU	$5,510	$600	$62.43	$1.58	7

[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

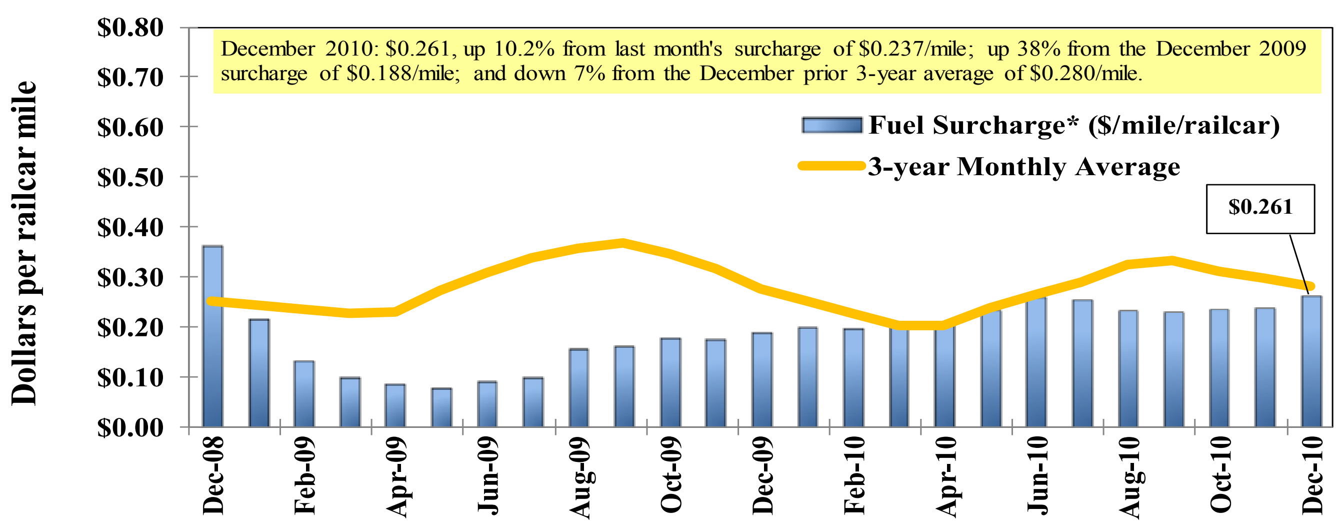
[4]Percentage change year over year calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surchage

[5] Beginning 12/6/10, El Castillo replaced Penjamo, GJ as the destination

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.

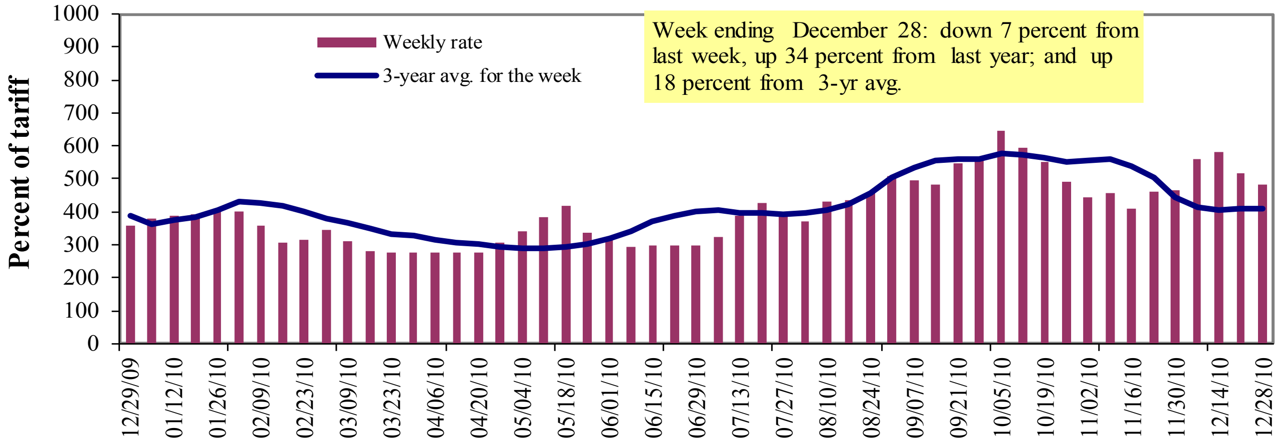
* Mileage-based fuel surcharges for March and April 2007 are estimated. Beginning January 2009, the Canadian Pacific fuel surcharge is computed by a monthly average of the bi-weekly fuel surcharge.

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	Illinois River	St. Louis	Cincinnati	Lower Ohio	Cairo-Memphis
Rate[1]	12/28/2010	-	-	483	340	408	408	297
	12/21/2010	-	-	518	382	408	408	359
$/ton	12/28/2010	-	-	22.41	13.57	19.14	16.48	9.33
	12/21/2010	-	-	24.04	15.24	19.14	16.48	11.27
Current week % change from the same week:								
	Last year	-	-	34	22	35	35	23
	3-year avg. [2]	-	-	18	6	18	18	10
Rate[1]	January	-	-	450	327	395	395	290
	March	-	377	365	295	358	358	275

[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

Calculating barge rate per ton:
(Index * 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 (see figure 9).

Figure 9

Benchmark tariff rates

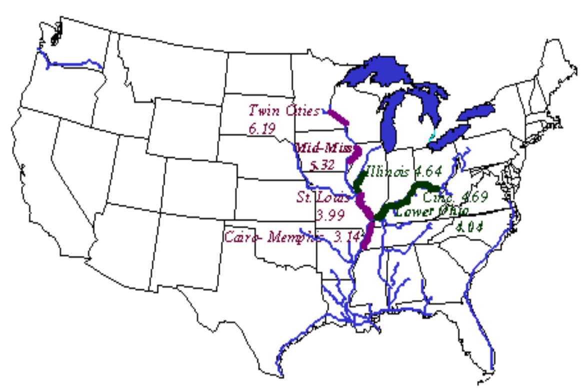
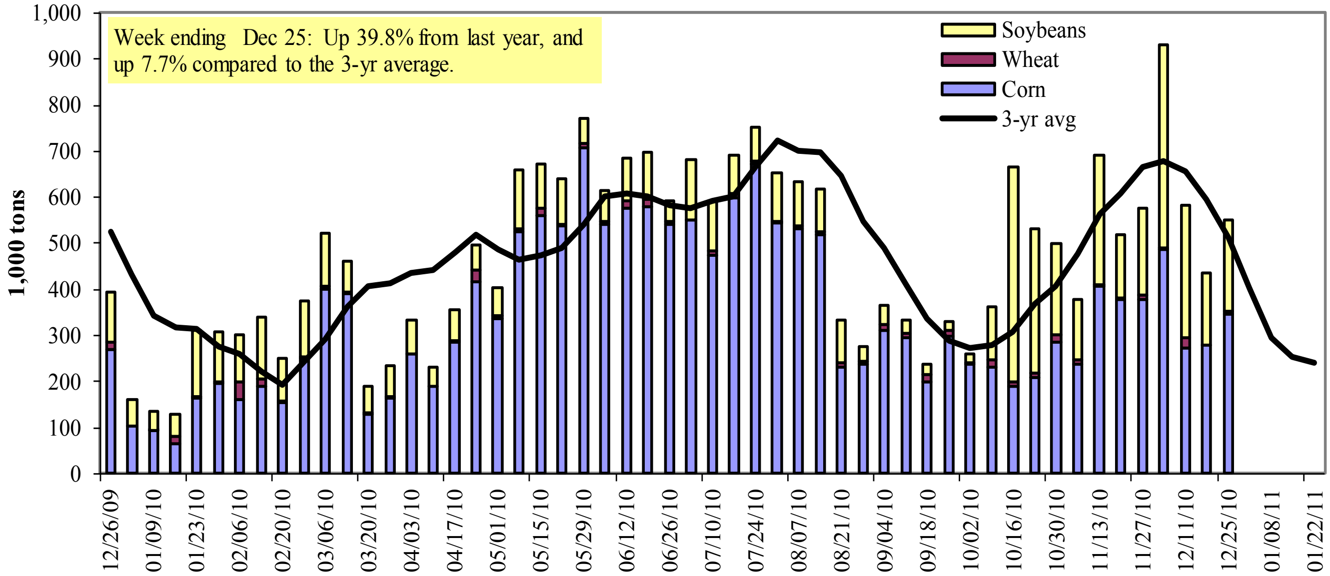


Figure 10

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 (www.mvr.usace.army.mil/mvrimi/omni/webrpts/default.asp)

Table 10

Barge Grain Movements (1,000 tons)

Week ending 12/25/2010	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River					
Rock Island, IL (L15)	0	0	0	0	0
Winfield, MO (L25)	106	0	95	3	204
Alton, IL (L26)	333	6	167	0	506
Granite City, IL (L27)	345	8	198	0	552
Illinois River (L8)	232	6	65	0	303
Ohio River (L52)	87	13	93	4	197
Arkansas River (L1)	0	8	97	6	112
Weekly total - 2010	432	30	389	9	860
Weekly total - 2009	339	26	224	3	593
2010 YTD[1]	22,551	1,207	10,345	477	34,580
2009 YTD	23,424	1,501	10,465	430	35,819
2010 as % of 2009 YTD	96	80	99	111	97
Last 4 weeks as % of 2009[2]	75	141	143	116	100
Total 2009	23,424	1,501	10,465	430	35,819

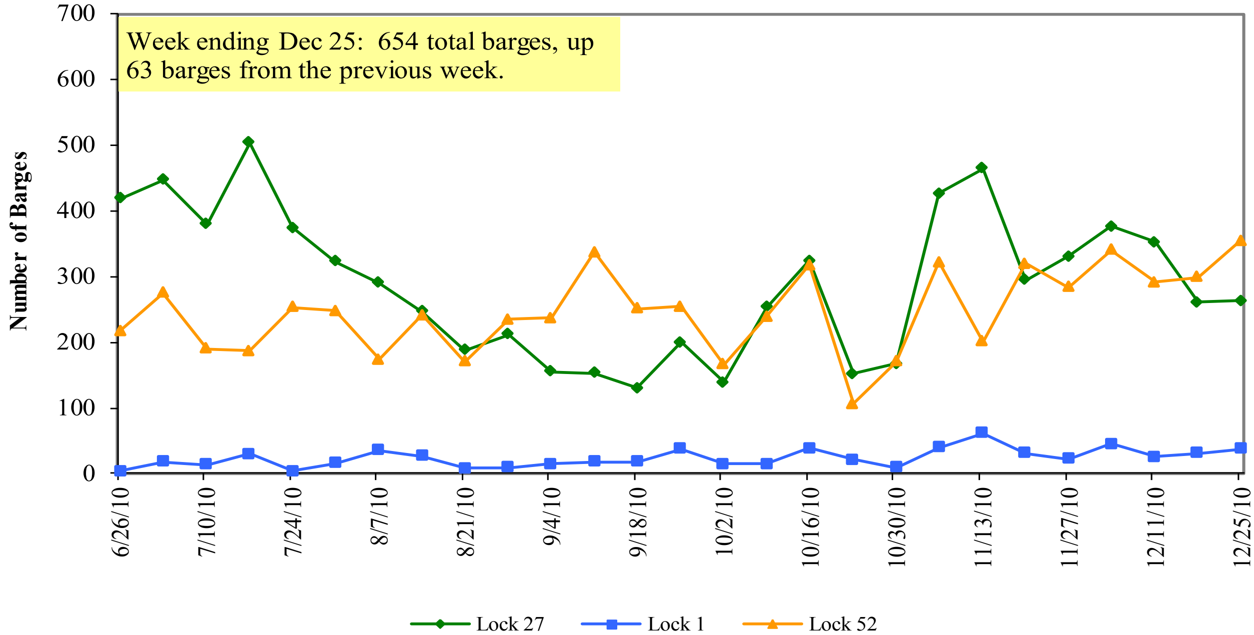
[1] Weekly total, YTD (year-to-date) and calendar year total includes Miss/27, Ohio/52, and Ark/1; "Other" refers to oats, barley, sorghum, and rye.

[2] As a percent of same period in 2009.

Note: Total may not add exactly, due to rounding

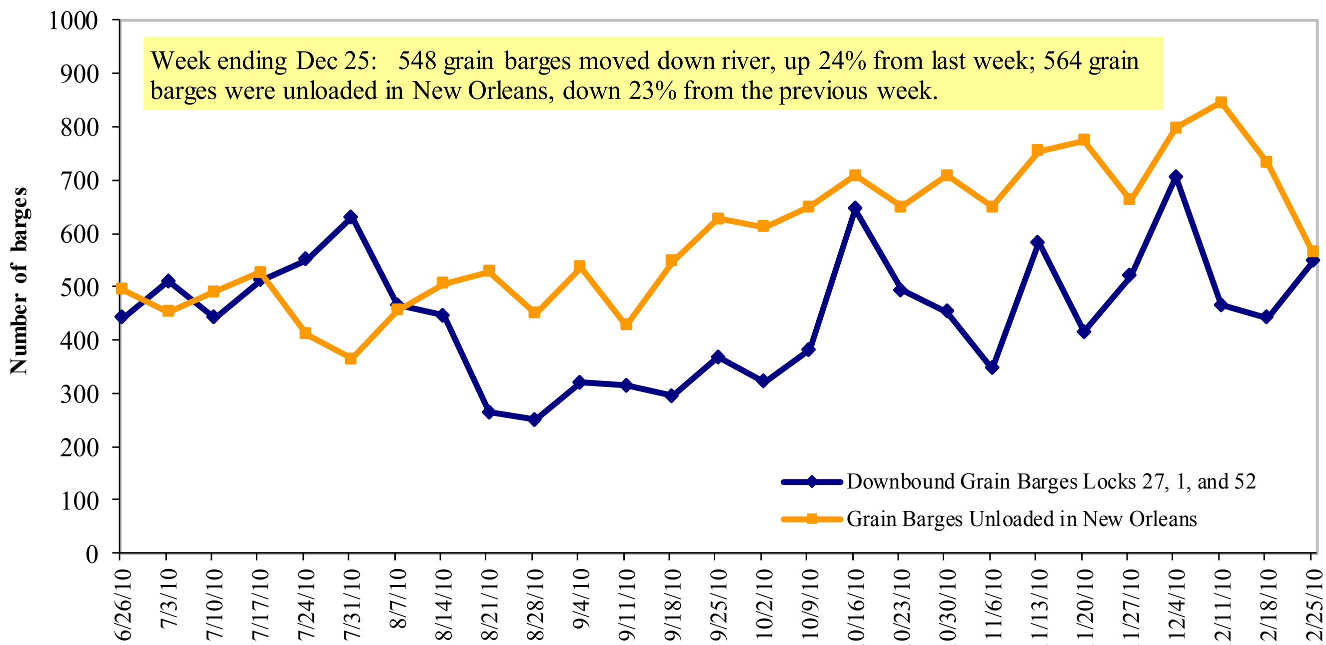
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (www.mvr.usace.army.mil/mvrimi/omni/webrpts/default.asp)

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 12/27/2010 (US $/gallon)

			Change from	
Region	**Location**	**Price**	**Week ago**	**Year ago**
I	East Coast	3.313	0.053	0.564
	New England	3.406	0.031	0.544
	Central Atlantic	3.428	0.047	0.571
	Lower Atlantic	3.256	0.059	0.563
II	Midwest[2]	3.278	0.049	0.571
III	Gulf Coast[3]	3.226	0.043	0.537
IV	Rocky Mountain	3.311	0.021	0.583
V	West Coast	3.405	0.039	0.564
	California	3.470	0.063	0.568
Total	U.S.	3.294	0.046	0.562

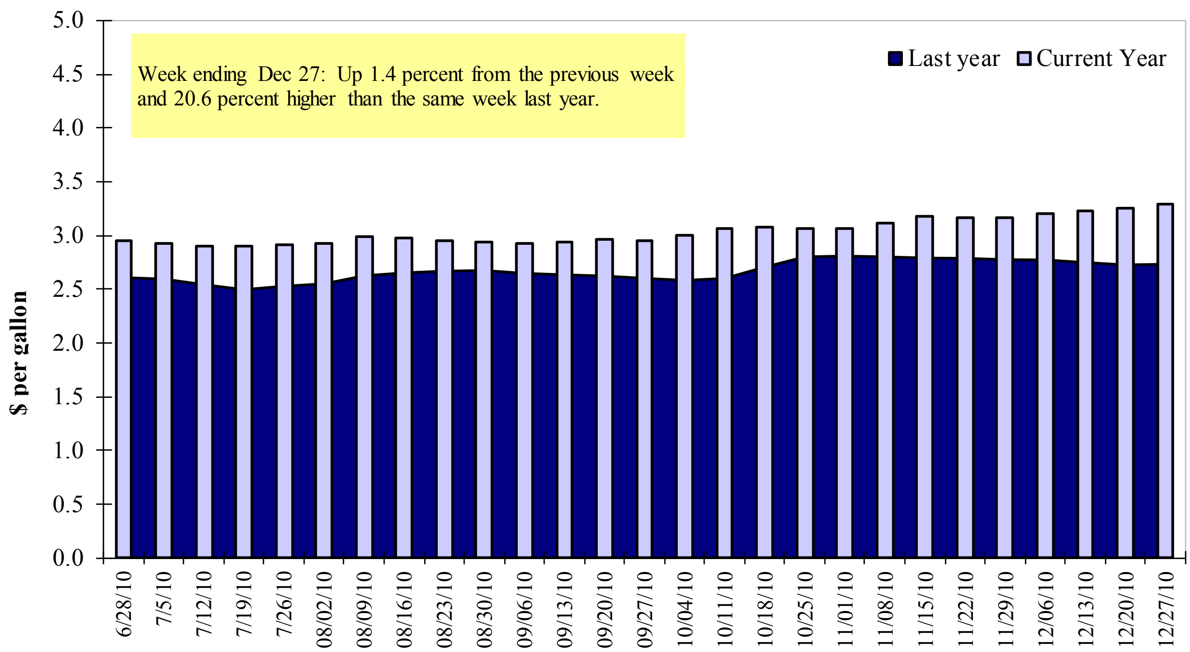
[1]Diesel fuel prices include all taxes. Prices represent an average of all types of diesel fuel.

[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]									
12/16/2010	4,040	832	2,612	1,287	102	8,873	12,443	14,873	36,189
This week year ago	1,369	501	972	670	241	3,752	11,684	13,551	28,987
Cumulative exports-marketing year[2]									
2010/11 YTD	7,541	1,103	4,512	2,541	651	16,349	12,814	19,440	48,602
2009/10 YTD	4,343	1,732	2,800	2,341	640	11,837	12,556	17,141	41,534
YTD 2010/11 as % of 2009/10	174	64	161	109	102	138	102	113	117
Last 4 wks as % of same period 2008/0(	280	161	281	193	63	235	106	119	129
2009/10 Total	8,458	2,733	5,329	3,897	983	21,400	47,700	39,285	108,385
2008/09 Total	11,244	5,100	5,408	3,420	454	25,626	44,650	33,705	103,981

[1] Current unshipped export sales to date

[2] Shipped export sales to date; the new marketing year now 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 12/16/10	**Total Commitments**[2]		**% change**	**Exports**[3]
	2010/11	**2009/10**	**current MY**	
	Current MY	**Last MY**	**from last MY**	**2009/10**
	- 1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
Japan	7,199	6,629	9	14,343
Mexico	3,841	4,825	(20)	7,999
Korea	3,271	3,210	2	7,562
Taiwan	1,205	1,479	(19)	2,949
Egypt	1,633	880	86	2,935
Top 5 importers	**17,147**	**17,023**	**1**	**35,788**
Total US corn export sales	**25,256**	**24,241**	**4**	**50,460**
% of Projected	51%	48%		
Change from Last Week	906	1,592		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	68%	70%		
USDA forecast, December 2010	**49,530**	**50,460**	**(2)**	
Corn Use for Ethanol USDA forecast, Ethanol December 2010	**121,920**	**116,027**	**5**	

(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.

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

Table 14

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

Week ending 12/16/10	Total Commitments[2] 2010/11 Current MY	2009/10 Last MY	% change current MY from last MY	Exports[3] 2009/10
	- 1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
China	22,019	18,874	17	22,454
Mexico	1,537	1,377	12	3,276
Japan	1,181	1,322	(11)	2,347
EU-25	1,362	1,266	8	2,647
Taiwan	773	1,057	(27)	1,556
Top 5 importers	**26,871**	**23,895**	**12**	**32,280**
Total US soybean export sales[4]	**34,313**	**30,691**	**12**	**40,850**
% of Projected	79%	75%		
Change from last week	828	1,196		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	78%	78%		
USDA forecast, December 2010	**43,270**	**40,850**	**6**	
Soybean Use for Biodiesel USDA forecast, December 2010	**6,954**	**4,076**	**71**	

(n) indicates negative number.

[1]Based on FAS 2008/09 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.

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

[4] Not included - FAS Press Release: 150,000 mt on 12/23 to Unknown for 2010/11.

Table 15

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

Week Ending 12/16/2010	Total Commitments[2] 2010/11 Current MY	2009/10 Last MY	% change current MY from last MY	Exports[3] 2009/10
	- 1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
Nigeria	2,219	2,205	1	3,233
Japan	2,586	2,173	19	3,148
Mexico	2,198	1,314	67	1,975
Philippines	1,722	1,265	36	1,518
Korea, South	1,263	828	53	1,111
Taiwan	604	574	5	844
Venezuela	454	381	19	658
Colombia	595	447	33	575
Peru	700	374	87	567
Egypt	2,571	456	464	529
Top 10 importers	**14,911**	**10,015**	**49**	**14,156**
Total US wheat export sales[4]	**25,222**	**15,589**	**62**	**23,980**
% of Projected	74%	65%		
Change from last week	591	221		
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	59%	64%		
USDA forecast, December 2010	**34,020**	**23,980**	**42**	

(n) indicates negative number.

[1]Based on FAS **2008/09** 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.

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

[4]Not Included, FAS Press Release: 100,000 mt HRW to Iraq on 12/23 for 2010/11.

Table 16

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

Port regions	Week ending 12/23/10	Previous Week[1]	Current Week as % of Previous	2010 YTD[1]	2009 YTD[1]	2010 YTD as % of 2009 YTD	Last 4-weeks as % of 2009	Last 4-weeks as % of 3-yr. avg.	Total[1] 2009
Pacific Northwest									
Wheat	260	207	126	10,927	9,986	109	143	123	10,091
Corn	136	63	216	9,669	8,239	117	89	92	8,498
Soybeans	16	248	6	9,646	9,686	100	49	71	9,743
Total	**412**	**518**	**80**	**30,242**	**27,912**	**108**	**80**	**92**	**28,332**
Mississippi Gulf									
Wheat	88	84	104	4,095	3,927	104	240	211	4,019
Corn	576	532	108	29,224	28,460	103	145	104	28,843
Soybeans	474	657	72	21,830	20,043	109	90	105	21,831
Total	**1,137**	**1,273**	**89**	**55,149**	**52,430**	**105**	**113**	**109**	**54,693**
Texas Gulf									
Wheat	103	281	37	9,077	5,622	161	134	147	5,735
Corn	94	19	494	1,859	1,946	96	94	93	1,968
Soybeans	124	102	121	1,916	2,351	82	70	194	2,402
Total	**321**	**402**	**80**	**12,853**	**9,919**	**130**	**102**	**148**	**10,105**
Great Lakes									
Wheat	24	46	52	1,897	990	192	221	177	990
Corn	0	0	n/a	100	353	28	0	0	353
Soybeans	0	9	0	576	781	74	83	114	781
Total	**24**	**55**	**43**	**2,573**	**2,124**	**121**	**129**	**118**	**2,124**
Atlantic									
Wheat	0	0	n/a	314	551	57	67	1	552
Corn	0	6	0	446	465	96	26	20	472
Soybeans	0	18	2	1,254	1,216	103	24	52	1,268
Total	**0**	**24**	**1**	**2,015**	**2,232**	**90**	**24**	**40**	**2,292**
U.S. total from ports[2]									
Wheat	475	618	77	26,311	21,076	125	159	143	21,387
Corn	806	619	130	41,298	39,463	105	121	97	40,134
Soybeans	614	1,035	59	35,222	34,077	103	71	97	36,025
Total	**1,894**	**2,272**	**83**	**102,832**	**94,617**	**109**	**97**	**105**	**97,546**

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

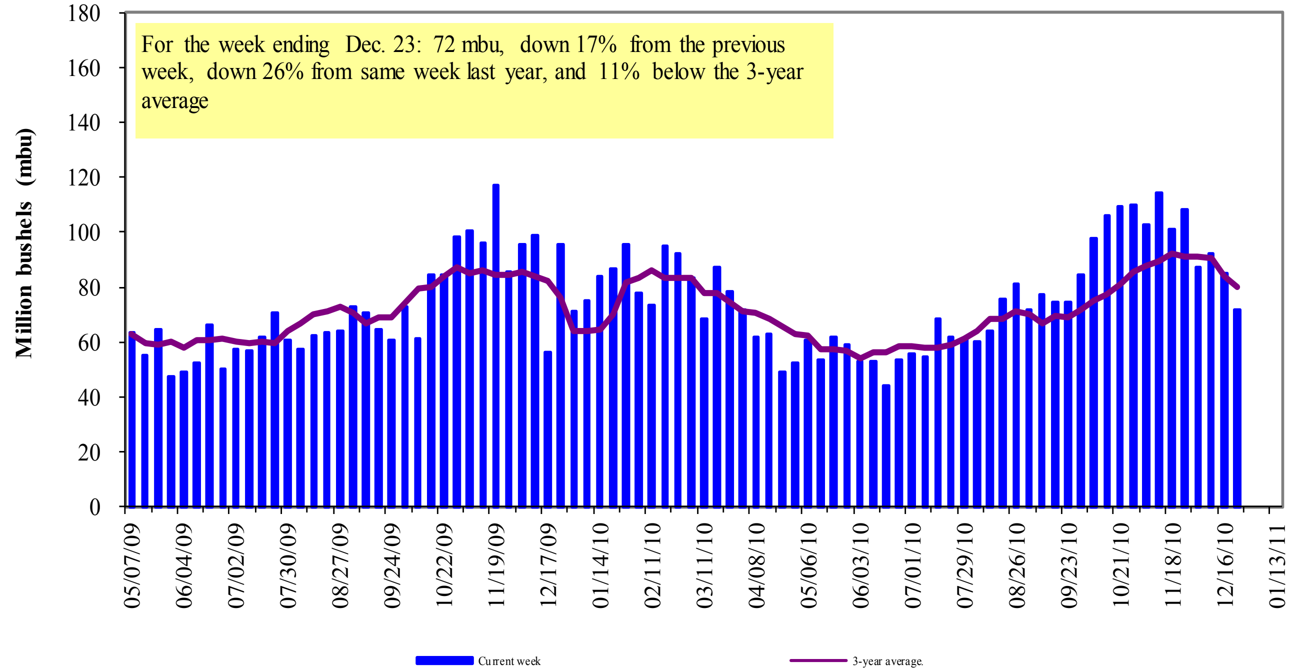
[2] Total includes only port regions shown above

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 62 percent of the U.S. export grain shipments departed through the U.S. Gulf region in 2009.

Figure 14

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

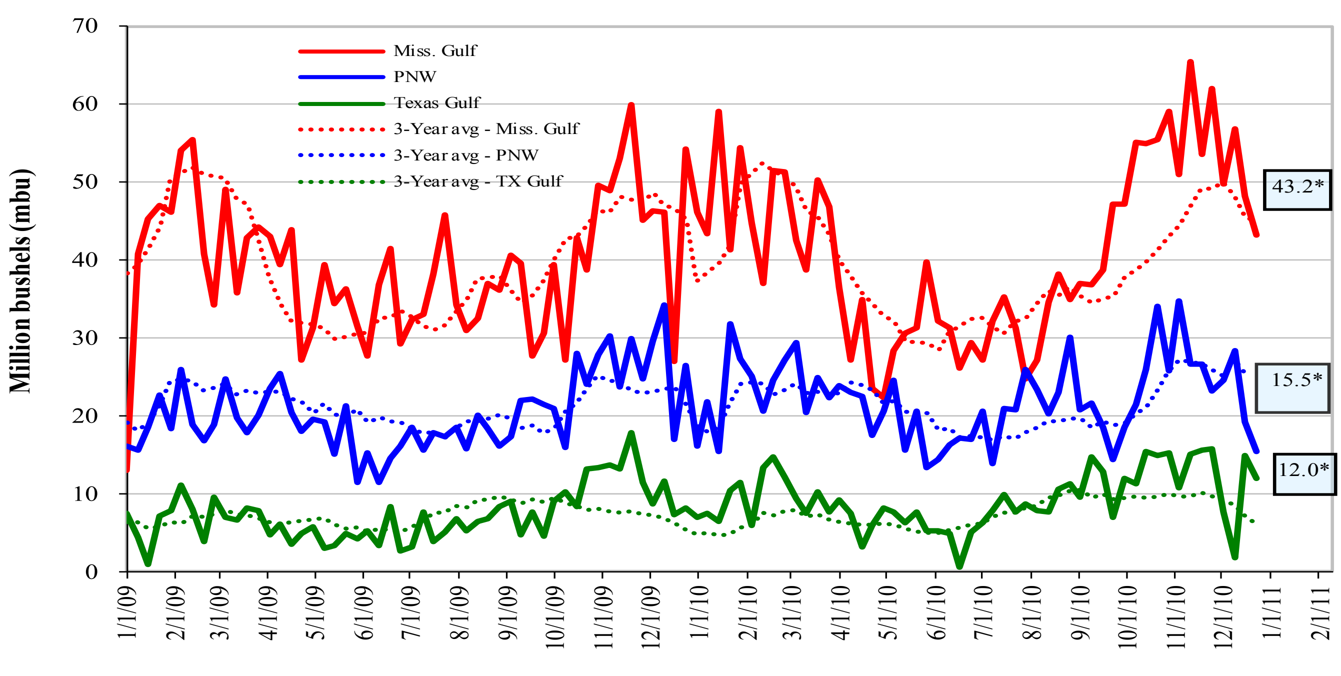


Source: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration/USDA (www.gipsa.usda.gov)

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.

Dec 23 % change from:	MS Gulf	TX Gulf	U.S. Gulf	PNW
Last week	down 10	down 19	down 12	down 19
Last year (same week)	down 20	up 48	down 11	down 41
3-yr avg. (4-wk mov. avg.)	down 4	up 95	up 7.5	down 14

Ocean Transportation

Table 17

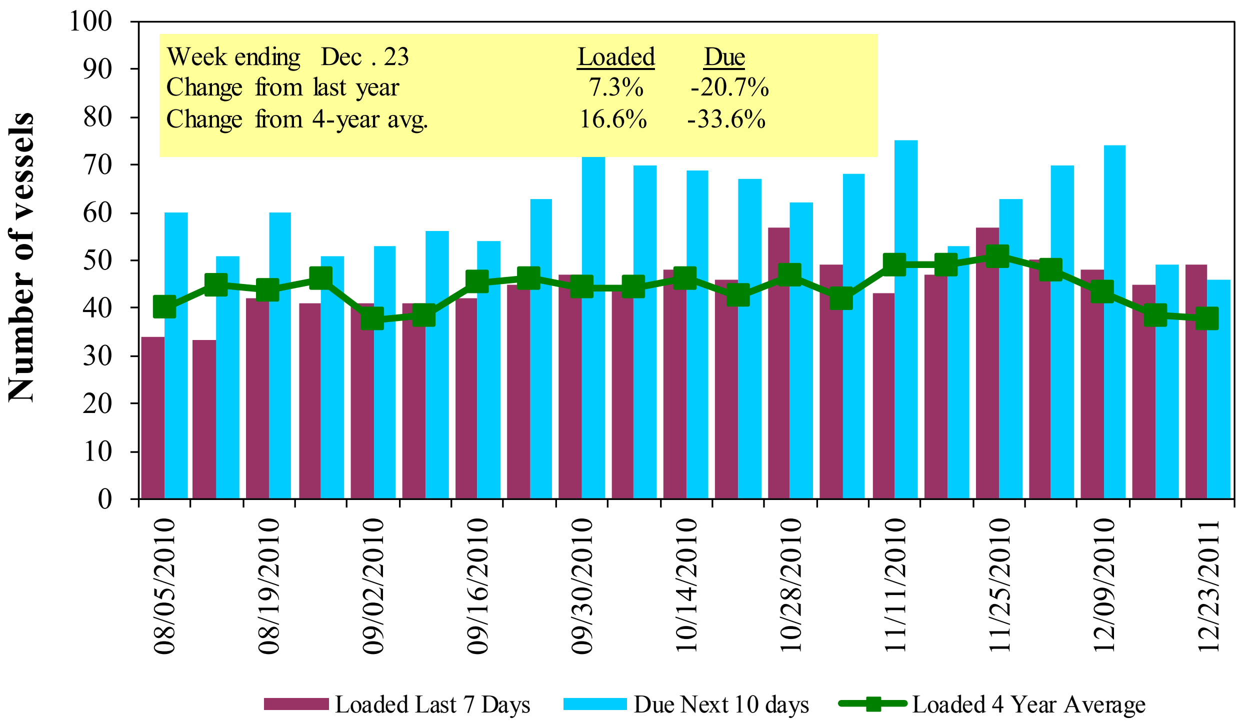
Weekly Port Region Grain Ocean Vessel Activity (number of vessels)

	Gulf			Pacific Northwest	Vancouver B.C.
Date	In port	Loaded 7-days	Due next 10-days	In port	In port
12/23/2010	34	44	46	20	10
12/16/2010	40	49	49	21	14
2009 range	(18..72)	(21..57)	(37..86)	(2..19)	(3..19)
2009 avg.	37	39	55	10	9

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 16

U.S. Gulf[1] Vessel Loading Activity

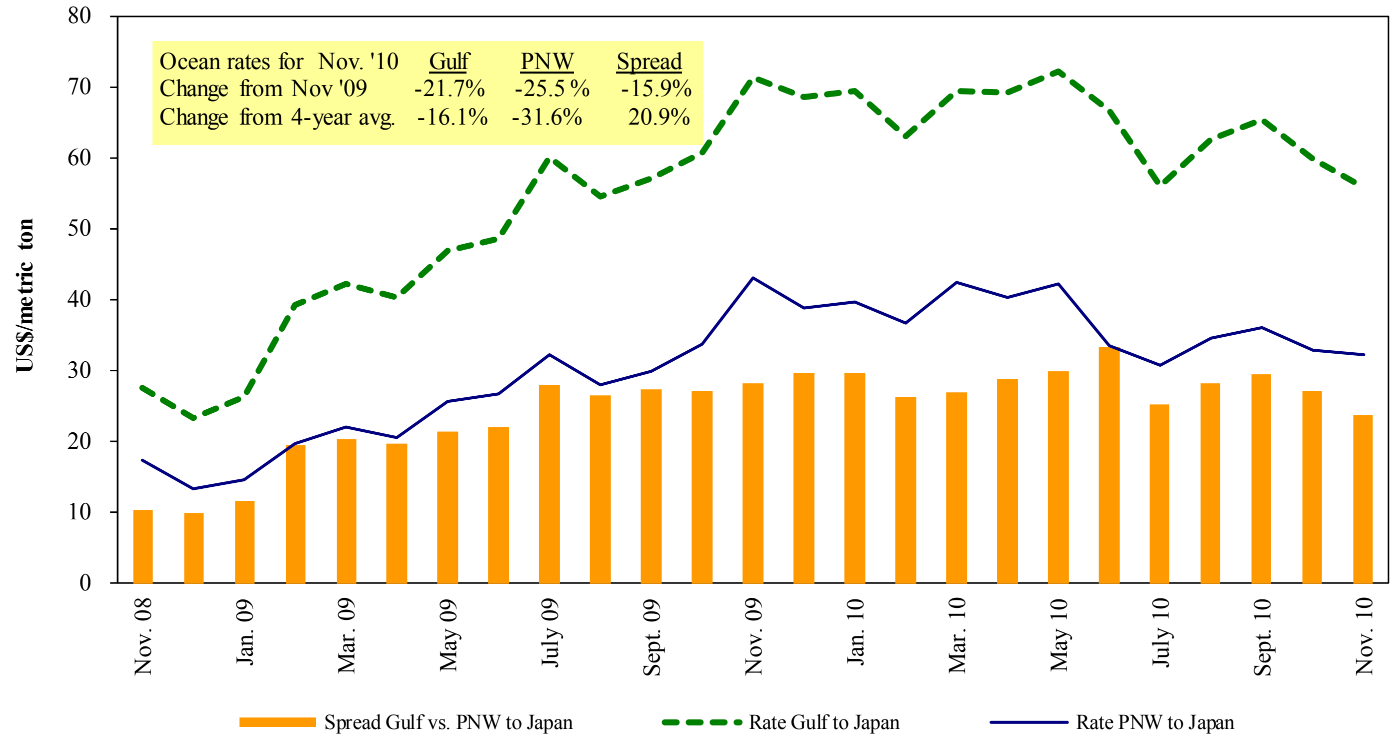


Source:Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

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

Figure 17

Grain Vessel Rates, U.S. to Japan



Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting

Table 18

Ocean Freight Rates For Selected Shipments, Week Ending 12/25/2010

Export region	Import region	Grain types	Loading date	Volume loads (metric tons)	Freight rate (US$/metric ton)
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Dec 22/31	55,000	57.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Dec 20/30	55,000	57.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Dec 1/5	55,000	63.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 20/30	55,000	56.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 15/24	55,000	57.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 15/24	55,000	56.75
U.S. Gulf	Portugal	Soybeanmeal	Oct 29/Nov 10	24,000	36.00
U.S. Gulf	Pakistan[1]	Wheat	Nov 26/Dec 6	8,100	77.99
Brazil	Algeria	Corn	Oct 15/20	25,000	36.00
Brazil	Morocco	Heavy Grain	Oct 3/5	26,000	36.75
France	Algeria	Wheat	Oct 30/Nov 5	22,500	29.00
River Plate	Algeria	Corn	Dec 5/10	25,000	36.00
River Plate	Algeria	Soybeanmeal	Nov 28/30	25,000	39.50
River Plate	Algeria	Corn	Nov 16/25	25,000	31.00
River Plate	Italy	Heavy Grain	Nov 1/2	28,000	41.50
River Plate	Poland	Soybeanmeal	Oct 28/30	15,000	48.00
Romania	Egypt Med	Wheat	Nov 1/10	25,000	17.25
Ukraine	Egypt	Corn	Oct 20/25	25,000	18.75

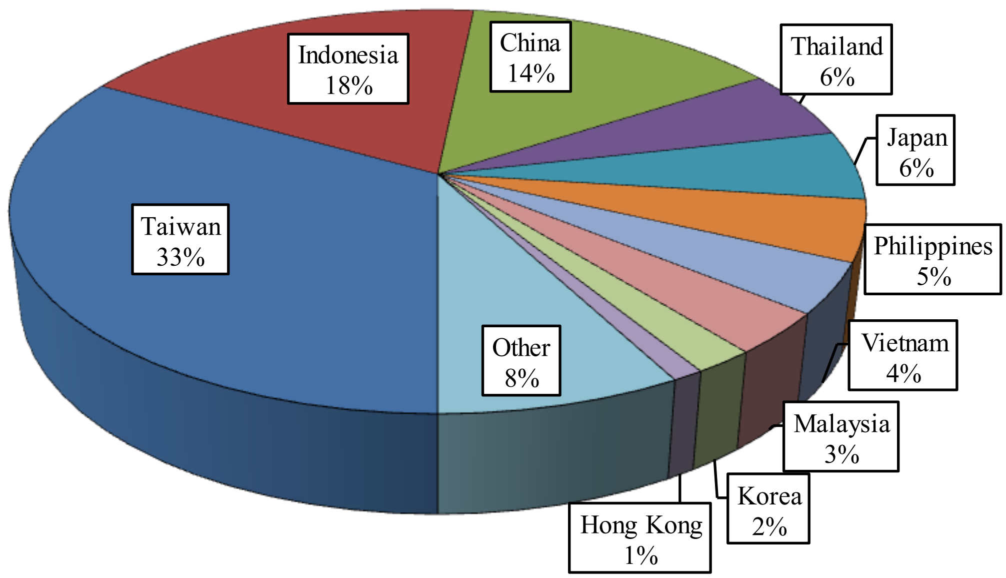
Rates shown are for metric ton (2,204.62 lbs. = 1 metric ton), F.O.B., except where otherwise indicates; op = option

[1]75 percent of food aid from the United States is required to be shipped on U.S.-flag vessels.

In 2009, containers were used to transport 5 percent of total waterborne grain exports, and 6 percent of U.S. grain exports to Asia.

Figure 18

Top 10 Destination Markets for U.S. Containerized Grain Exports, October 2010

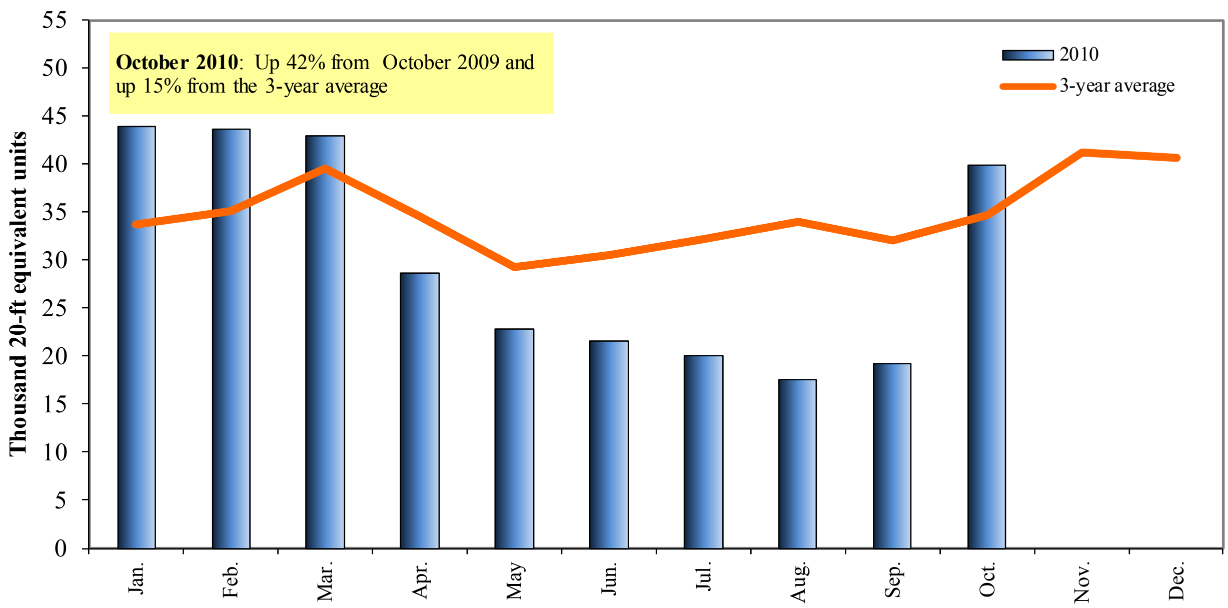


Source: Port Import Export Reporting Service (PIERS)

Note: The following Harmonized Tariff Codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements (recently added codes are highlighted in bold type): 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: Port Import Export Reporting Service (PIERS), *Journal of Commerce*

Note: The following Harmonized Tariff Codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements (recently added codes are highlighted in bold type): 100190, 100200, 100300, 100400, 100590, 100700, 110100, 230310, 110220, 110290, 120100, 230210, 230990, **230330**, and **120810**.

Contacts and Links

Coordinators		
Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo	surajudeen.olowolayemo@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 3050
Pierre Bahizi	pierre.bahizi@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 2503
Weekly Highlight Editors		
Marina Denicoff	marina.denicoff@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 2504
Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo	surajudeen.olowolayemo@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 3050
April Taylor	april.taylor@ams.usda.gov	(202) 295 - 7374
Grain Transportation Indicators		
Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo	surajudeen.olowolayemo@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 3050
Rail Transportation		
Marvin Prater	marvin.prater@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 3051
Johnny Hill	johnny.hill@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 2506
Barge Transportation		
Nicholas Marathon	nick.marathon@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 2508
April Taylor	april.taylor@ams.usda.gov	(202) 295 - 7374
Truck Transportation		
April Taylor	april.taylor@ams.usda.gov	(202) 295 - 7374
Grain Exports		
Johnny Hill	johnny.hill@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 2506
Marina Denicoff	marina.denicoff@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 2504
Ocean Transportation		
Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo (Freight rates and vessels)	surajudeen.olowolayemo@ams.usda.gov	(202) 694 - 3050
April Taylor (Container movements)	april.taylor@ams.usda.gov	(202) 295 - 7374

Subscription Information: Send relevant information to **GTRContactUs@ams.usda.gov** for an electronic copy *(printed copies are also available upon request)*.