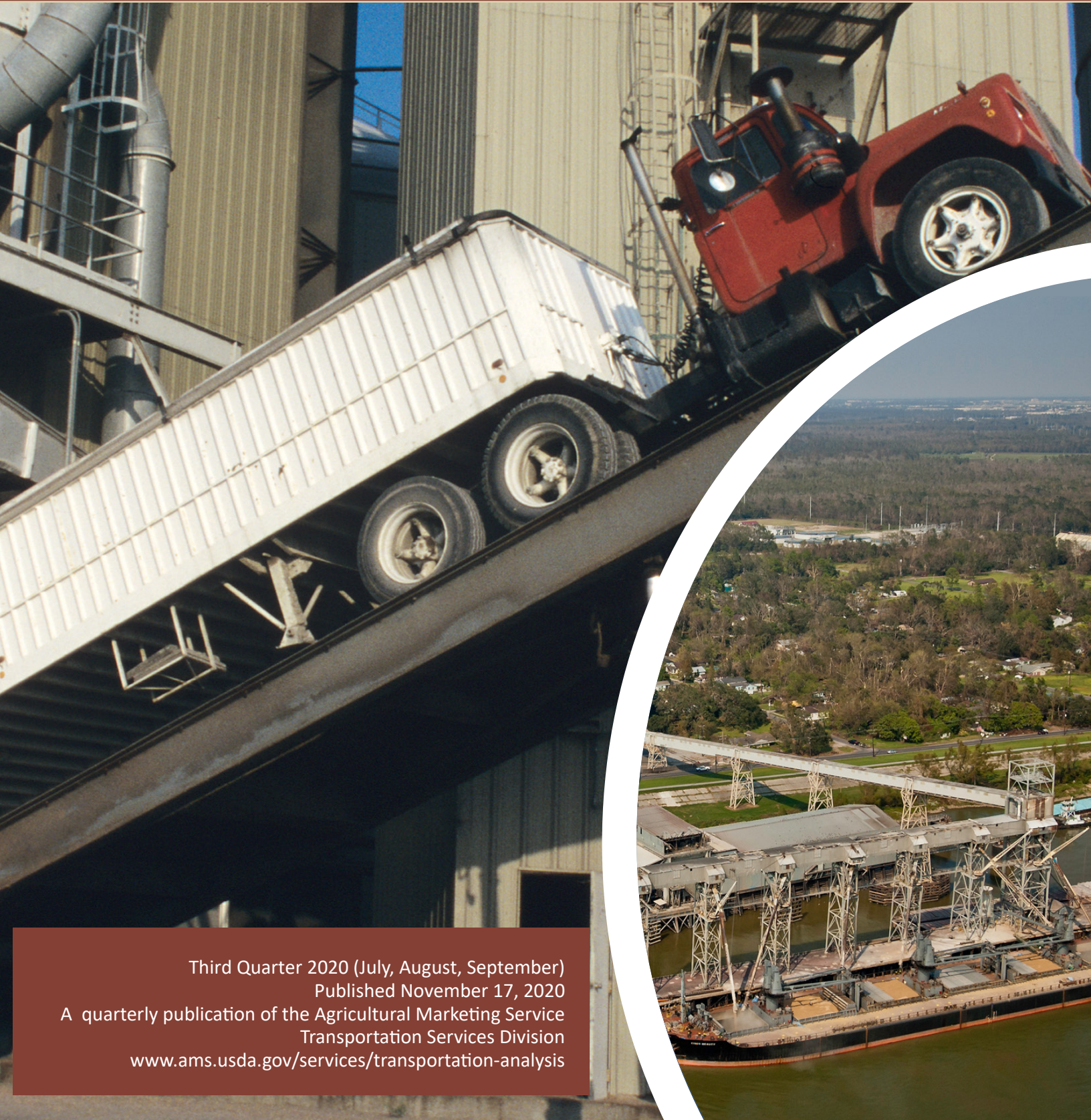




United States Department of Agriculture

# Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory



Third Quarter 2020 (July, August, September)  
Published November 17, 2020

A quarterly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service  
Transportation Services Division  
[www.ams.usda.gov/services/transportation-analysis](http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/transportation-analysis)



# Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory

## TRUCK ADVISORY

The truck advisory presents an overview of the transportation market for grain trucks, including national and regional truck rates, truck availability, truck usage, and diesel fuel prices.

**Table 1. U.S. grain truck market, 3rd quarter 2020**

	25 miles	100 miles	200 miles	Truck availability	Truck use	Future truck use
	<sup>1</sup> Rate per mile, per truckload			Quarterly index*		
				1 = Very easy to 5 = Very difficult	1 = Much lower to 5 = Much higher	
<b>National average<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>3.45</b>
North Central	3.92	3.09	3.03	2.50	3.50	3.50
East	3.56	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
South Central	3.80	3.17	3.03	2.30	2.74	3.33
West	4.27	3.53	3.43	3.00	4.20	4.22
Rocky Mountain	3.92	3.38	NA	2.00	3.00	3.00

<sup>1</sup> Rates are based on trucks with 80,000-pound (lb) gross vehicle weight limit, and are quoted in U.S. dollars

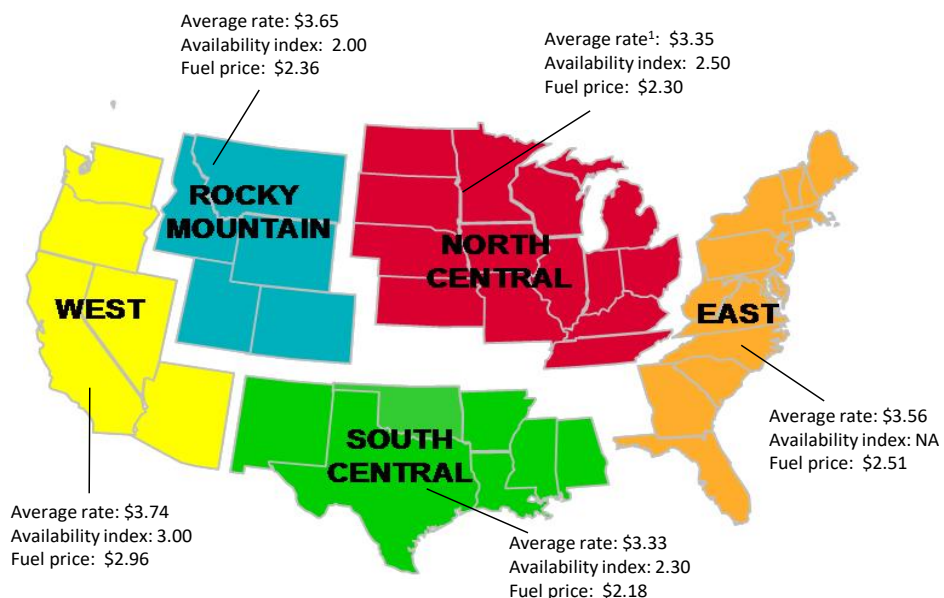
<sup>2</sup> National average is based on rates received from various States, but not every State is represented.

\*Current and future truck use indices are based on comparison to the same quarter last year.

Note: NA = not available because of low or no response rate.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

**Figure 1. U.S. Grain Truck Market, 3rd quarter 2020**



<sup>1</sup> Average rate per loaded mile, based on truck rates for trips of 25, 100, and 200 miles.

Note: Fuel prices are a quarterly average (unit per gallon).

Source: Fuel price data are from U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, and availability index data are from USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

# Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory

## TRUCK USE

Truck use indices represent current and future national and regional truck use.

**Table 2. Regional truck use index\***

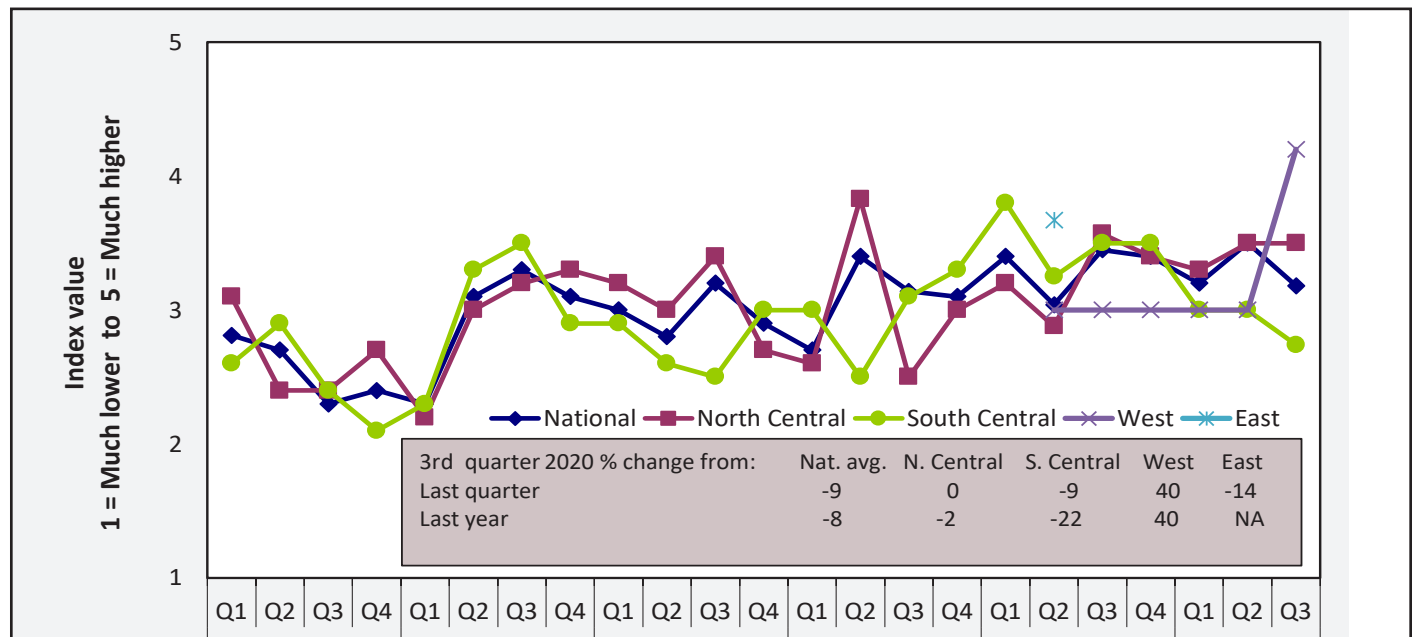
Current truck use 1 = Much lower to 5 = Much higher					Future truck use 1 = Much lower to 5 = Much higher			
2019	1st qtr.	2nd qtr.	3rd qtr.	4th qtr.	1st qtr.	2nd qtr.	3rd qtr.	4th qtr.
<b>National</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>3.30</b>
North Central	3.20	2.88	3.57	3.40	3.30	3.53	2.33	3.30
East	NA	3.67	NA	NA	NA	2.67	NA	NA
South Central	3.80	3.25	3.50	3.50	4.00	3.50	2.33	3.50
West	NA	3.00	3.00	3.00	NA	3.50	3.50	3.00
Rocky Mountain	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>2020</b>	<b>1st qtr.</b>	<b>2nd qtr.</b>	<b>3rd qtr.</b>	<b>4th qtr.</b>	<b>1st qtr.</b>	<b>2nd qtr.</b>	<b>3rd qtr.</b>	<b>4th qtr.</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>3.18</b>		<b>2.80</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>3.45</b>	
North Central	3.30	3.50	3.50		2.80	3.38	3.50	
East	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	
South Central	3.00	3.00	2.74		3.00	3.00	3.33	
West	3.00	3.00	4.20		2.50	3.00	4.22	
Rocky Mountain	NA	3.50	3.50		NA	3.00	3.00	

\*Current and future truck use indices are based on comparison to the same quarter last year.

Note: qtr. = quarter; NA = not available.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

**Figure 2. National truck usage, 3rd quarter 2020**



Note: Q = quarter; Nat. = national; avg. = average; N. = north; S. = south; NA = not available.

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

# Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory

## TRUCK AVAILABILITY

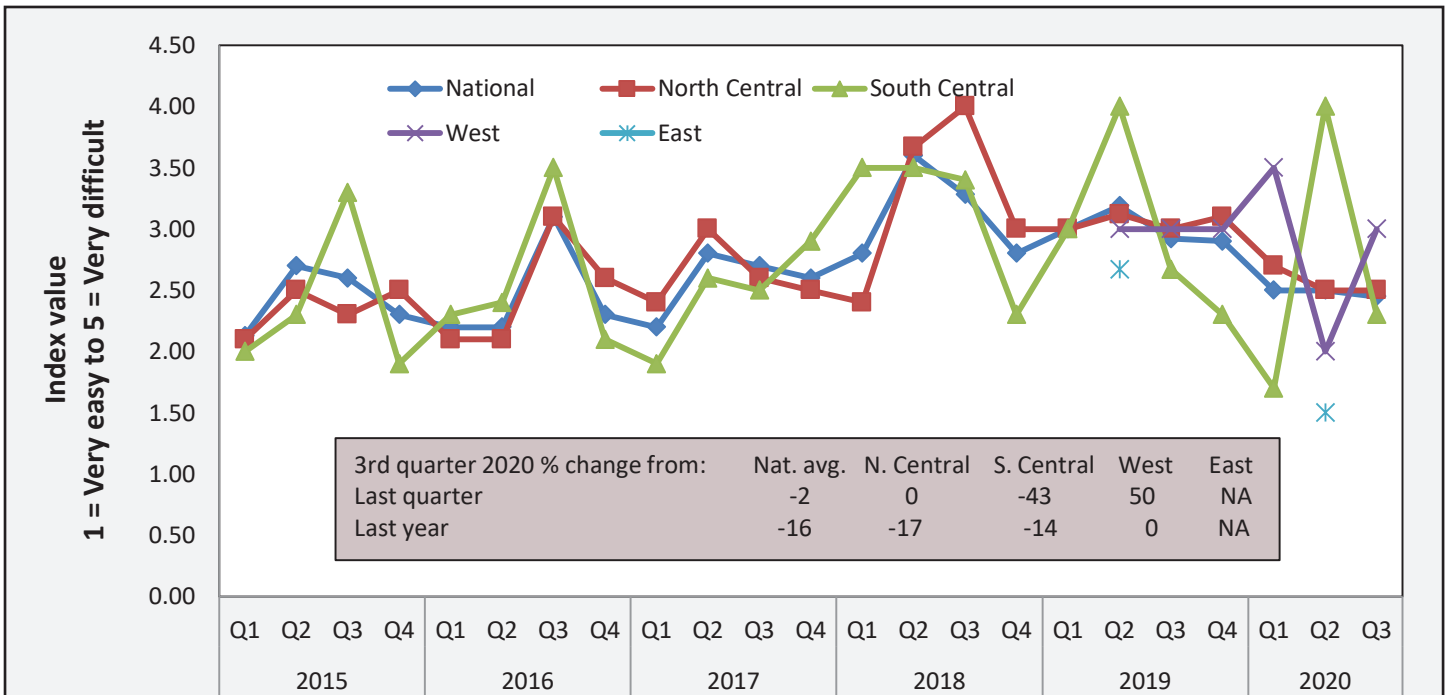
The truck availability index tracks the trends in perceived ease of hiring a truck as reported by grain elevators.

**Table 3. Quarterly national truck availability index**

Region	1 = Very easy 5 = Very difficult			Current quarter as % change from	
	3rd qtr. 2020	Previous qtr.	Same qtr. last year	Previous qtr.	Same qtr. last year
<b>National</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-16</b>
North Central	2.50	2.50	3.00	0	-17
East	NA	1.50	NA	NA	NA
South Central	2.30	4.00	2.67	-43	-14
West	3.00	2.00	3.00	50	0

Note: qtr. = quarter; NA = not available.  
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

**Figure 3. National truck availability**



Note: Q = quarter; Nat. = national; avg. = average; N. = north; S. = south; NA = not available.  
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

# Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory

## TRUCK RATES

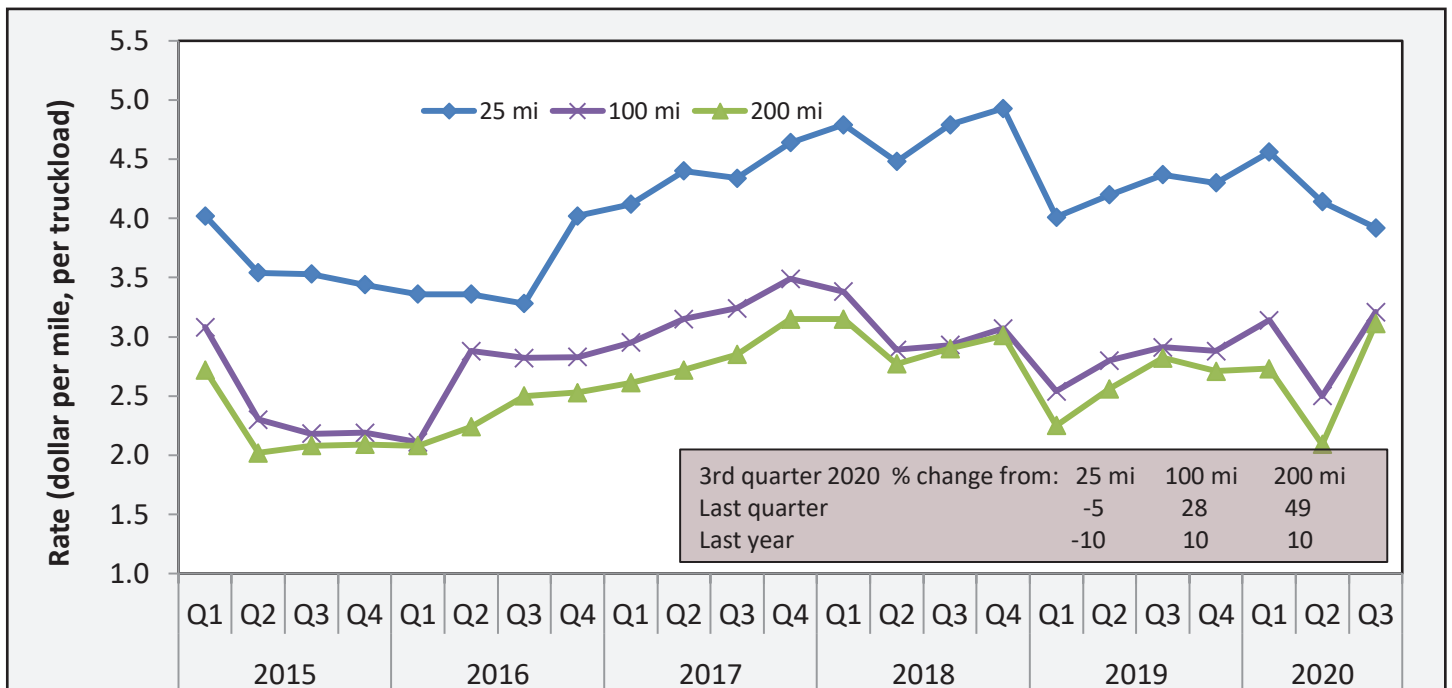
The truck is assumed to carry 55,000 lbs. or 25 metric tons of grain. Rates per metric ton per mile can be calculated from rates per truckload.

**Table 4. Average grain truck rates for short and long hauls, 3rd quarter 2020**

Region	(\$/mile per truckload)			% change from					
				Last qtr.			Same qtr. last year		
	25 miles	100 miles	200 miles	25 miles	100 miles	200 miles	25 miles	100 miles	200 miles
<b>National average</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>-5.3%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>-10.3%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>
North Central	3.92	3.09	3.03	2.6%	27.7%	51.5%	-16.8%	34.9%	36.5%
East	3.56	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
South Central	3.80	3.17	3.03	18.8%	6.7%	31.7%	-3.8%	-4.8%	-2.3%
West	4.27	3.53	3.43	14.8%	NA	NA	11.2%	10.3%	9.2%
Rocky Mountain	3.92	3.38	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Note: qtr. = quarter; NA = not available.  
 Rates are based on trucks with 80,000-pound (lb) gross vehicle weight limit.  
 Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

**Figure 4. National average truck rates by trip distance**



Note: Q = quarter; mi = miles.  
 Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

# Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory

## U.S. DIESEL FUEL RATES

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

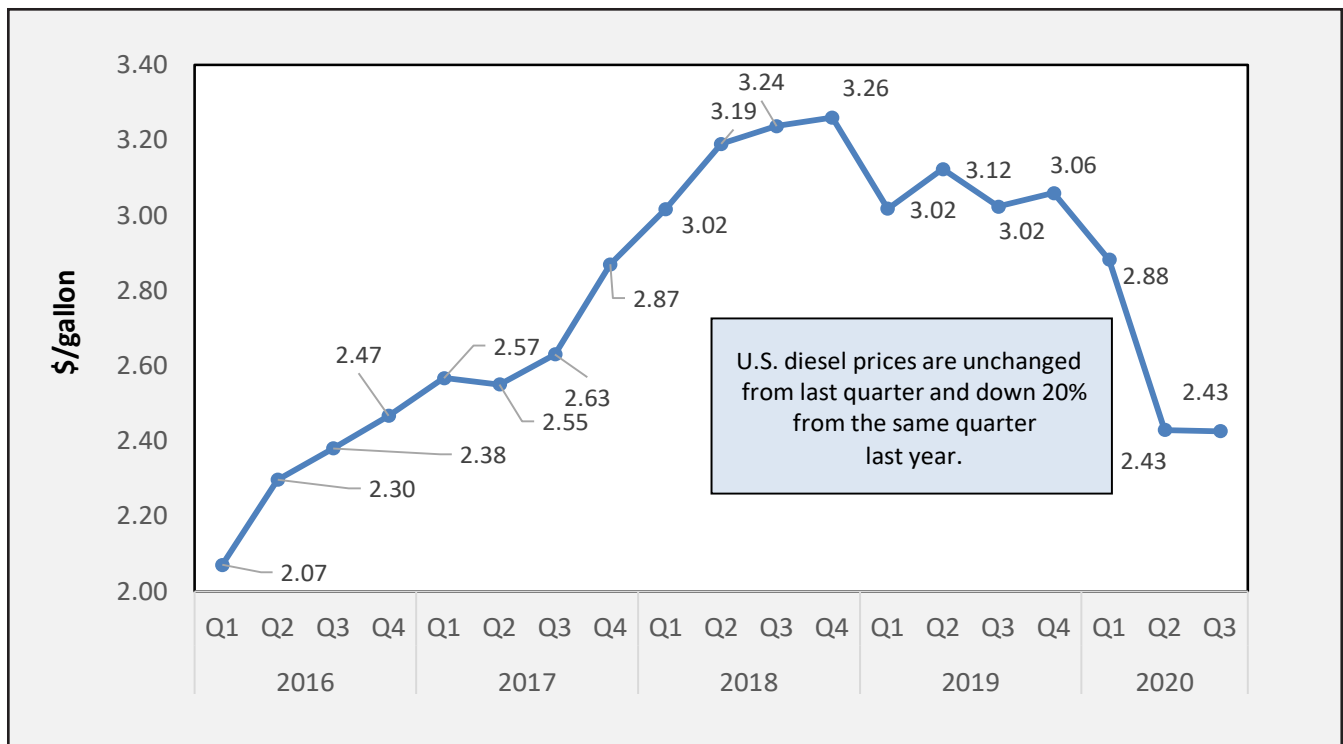
**Table 5. 3rd quarter 2020 average diesel fuel prices (all types - \$/gallon)**

Location	Price	Change from	
		Last qtr.	Same qtr. last year
East Coast	2.51	-0.02	-0.53
New England	2.62	-0.03	-0.45
Central Atlantic	2.69	-0.02	-0.54
Lower Atlantic	2.37	-0.02	-0.55
Midwest	2.30	0.03	-0.62
Gulf Coast	2.18	-0.03	-0.60
Rocky Mountain	2.36	-0.03	-0.61
West Coast	2.96	0.01	-0.64
California	3.26	0.03	-0.67
U.S.	2.43	0.00	-0.60

Note: qtr. = quarter.

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

**Figure 5. U.S. average on-highway diesel fuel prices**



Note: Q = quarter.

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

# Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory

## OCEAN RATES

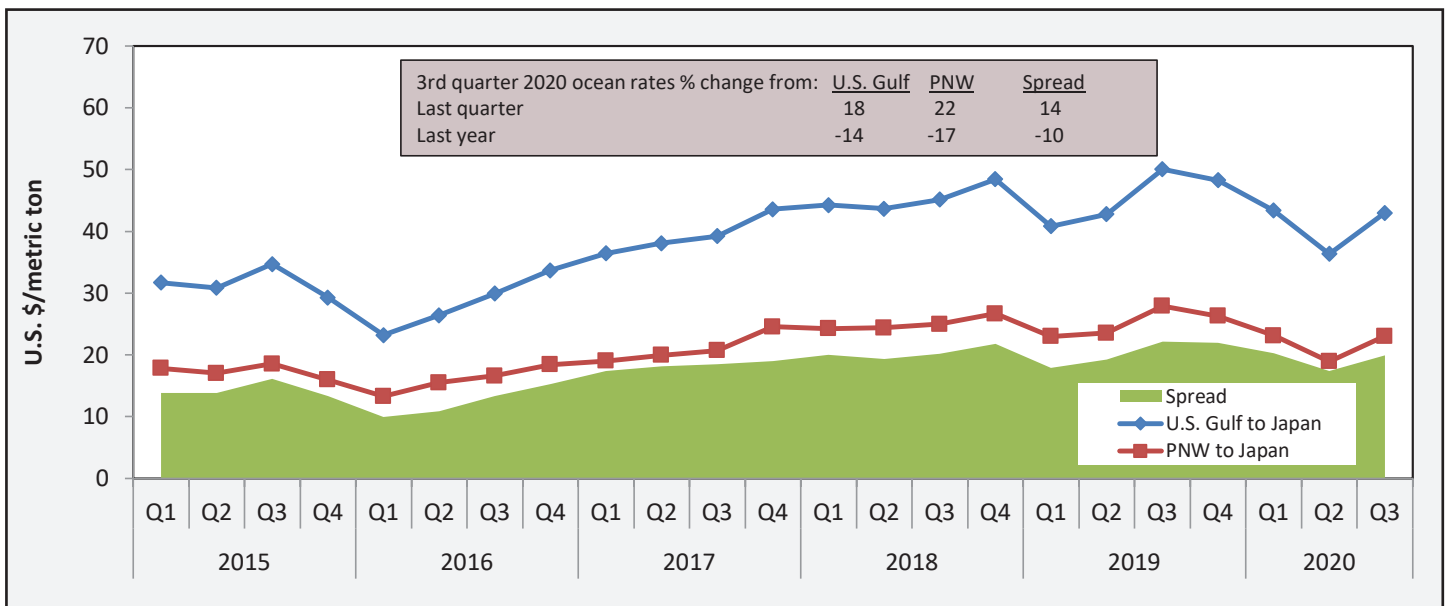
Quarterly ocean freight rates for shipping bulk grain from the U.S. Gulf and Pacific Northwest to selected foreign markets in dollars per metric ton.

**Table 6. Ocean shipping rates for bulk grain (\$/metric ton)**

U.S. Gulf to										
Country	1st qtr. 2019	2nd qtr. 2019	3rd qtr. 2019	4th qtr. 2019	Avg.	1st qtr. 2020	2nd qtr. 2020	3rd qtr. 2020	4th qtr. 2020	Avg.
Japan	40.85	42.78	50.05	48.26	45.49	43.38	36.33	42.99		40.90
Rotterdam	16.73	16.62	20.21	19.02	18.15	14.82	13.18	19.41		15.80
China	39.61	42.2	49.35	47.05	44.55	41.98	35.40	42.14		39.84
Mexico	13.89	14.01	15.5	15.23	14.66	13.64	12.41	14.39		13.48
Colombia: Atlantic Ports (East)	19.75	19.99	21.13	19.74	20.15	18.85	17.96	19.76		18.86
Colombia: Pacific Ports (West)	29.38	29.1	29.02	32.01	29.88	27.11	27.55	30.34		28.33
PNW to										
Country	1st qtr. 2019	2nd qtr. 2019	3rd qtr. 2019	4th qtr. 2019	Avg.	1st qtr. 2020	2nd qtr. 2020	3rd qtr. 2020	4th qtr. 2020	Avg.
Japan	22.98	23.56	27.9	26.28	25.18	23.10	18.94	23.05		21.70
China	22.44	22.93	27.28	25.71	24.59	22.28	18.20	22.37		20.95

Note: qtr. = quarter; avg. = average; PNW = Pacific Northwest.  
Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting.

**Figure 6. Grain vessel rates and spread, U.S. to Japan**



Note: Q = quarter; PNW = Pacific Northwest.  
Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting.

# Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory

## CONTACTS AND LINKS

**Surajudeen Olowolayemo**, Economist

E-mail: [Surajudeen.Olowolayemo@usda.gov](mailto:Surajudeen.Olowolayemo@usda.gov)

202.720.0119

**April Taylor**, Economist

E-mail: [April.Taylor@usda.gov](mailto:April.Taylor@usda.gov)

202.720.7880

### **Subscription Information:**

Please sign up to receive regular email announcements of the latest issue of *Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory* by entering your email address at the following link and selecting “Transportation” under the Publications, Data, and Reports section.

[https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAMS/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=USDAAMS\\_177](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAMS/subscriber/new?topic_id=USDAAMS_177)

### **Related Websites**

- [Grain Transportation Report](#)
- [Mexico Transport Cost Indicator Report](#)
- [Brazil Soybean Transportation Indicator](#)
- [Agricultural Refrigerated Truck Quarterly](#)

### **Preferred Citation:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. *Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory*. November 2020. Web. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/TS265.11-2020>>

**Photo Credit:** USDA

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

For assistance with accessibility issues related to this document, please email [Jessica.Ladd@usda.gov](mailto:Jessica.Ladd@usda.gov).