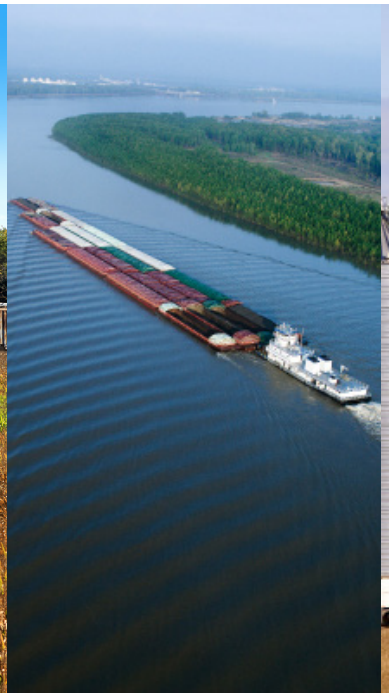
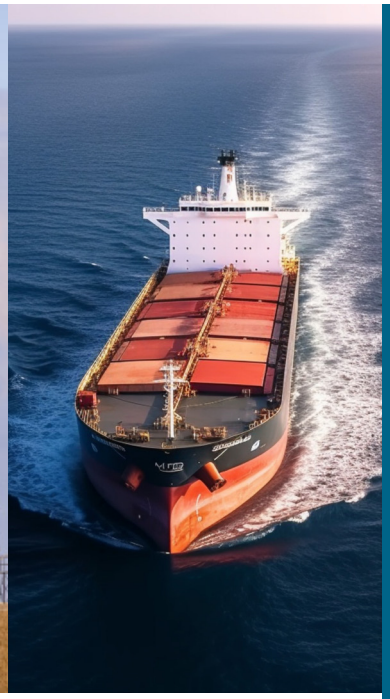
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Grain Transportation Report

Contents

Weekly Highlights 2
Snapshots by Sector 3
Feature Article 4
Grain Transportation Indicators 7
Rail Transportation 9
Barge Transportation 17
Truck Transportation 20
Grain Exports 21
Ocean Transportation 25
Contacts and Links 28

April 25, 2024
A weekly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service
www.ams.usda.gov/GTR

Port of Portland To Suspend Container Operations in October. Oregon's only ocean seaport, the Port of Portland, plans to suspend container operations on October 1, 2024, after negotiations with a third-party operator failed. Port officials still seek alternatives, but currently lack the funding needed to maintain operations.

After 2019, during the COVID-19 pandemic, volumes steadily rose, as the port provided an alternative to often-congested major seaports. However, over the past 3 years, as the industry returned to normal volumes, the Port of Portland has lost more than $30 million from container operations, including a projected $14 million from this year alone. Losing the Port of Portland as a container-shipping option will raise costs for agricultural producers who used the port—forcing them to truck goods to other ports.

The Port of Portland has a history of difficulty with container operations: container shipments were also halted in 2015 following a long-running labor dispute. Containerized grain exports from the Port of Portland reached an all-time peak of 120,000 metric tons (mt) in 2022, before falling to 76,000 mt in 2023.

DOT Seeks Information on National Multimodal Freight Network. On April 12, the U.S. Department of Transportation published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking comments on the best approach to identify critical freight facilities and corridors that will make up its National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFN).

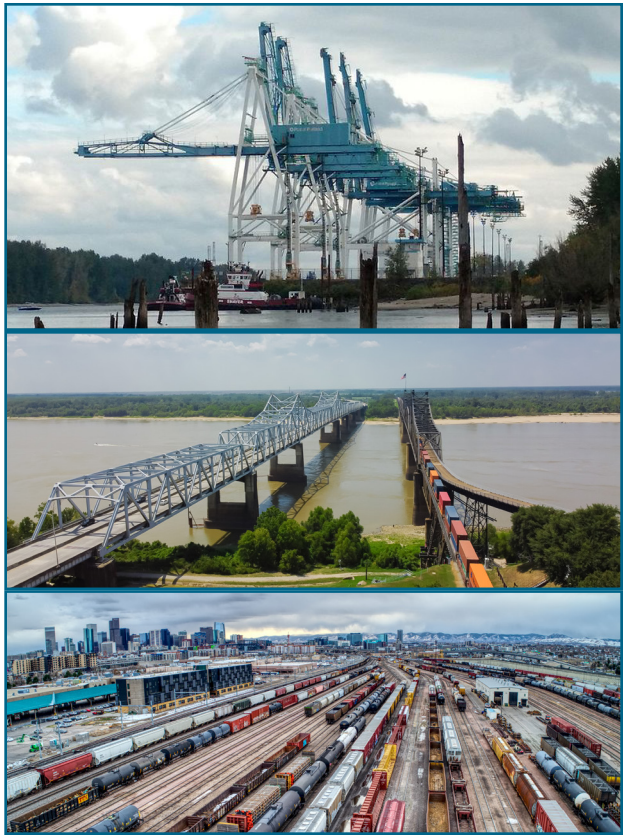
NMFN and the National Highway Freight Network serve similar goals. However, NMFN does not affect the National Highway Freight Network or the use of National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) formula funding. NMFN will be used to help States invest in efficient freight movement; inform freight transportation planning; and help assess and prioritize Federal investments toward national multimodal freight policy goals.

DOT is seeking comments from "multimodal freight system users, transportation providers, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, ports, airports, railroads, freight forwarders, brokers, other supply chain logisticians, scholars, and States." Comments must be received on or before June 11, 2024, to receive full consideration.

Railinc Releases Reports on Demographics of Railcar and Locomotive Fleets. Railinc, a subsidiary of the Association of American Railroads, recently released two free, downloadable industry reports on the demographics of the North American railcar and locomotive fleets.

Two main car types of covered hoppers are used to ship grain—C-113 (263,000 pounds when loaded) and C-114 (286,000 pounds when loaded). According to the *North American Freight Railcar Review 2024*, at the end of 2023, the North American revenue-earning fleet contained 88,000 C-113 railcars and 178,000 C-114 railcars. In 2023, the total grain railcar fleet was 2 percent larger than in 2022, and it is approaching the peak from 2018 (267,000 cars).

According to Railinc's *North American Locomotive Review 2024*, at the end of 2023, the North American fleet had 37,559 locomotives—down less than 1 percent from the previous year and down 5 percent from the peak in 2017. Since 2017, the fleet's locomotives have declined in number by an average of 1 percent per year, and their average age has risen. However, the newly added models tend to be more powerful and better at hauling heavy loads than older models.



Credit: M.O. Stevens

Export Sales

For the week ending April 11, **unshipped balances** of wheat, corn, and soybeans for marketing year (MY) 2023/24 totaled 21.23 million metric tons (mmt), down 7 percent from last week and down 4 percent from the same time last year.

Net **corn export sales** for MY 2023/24 were 0.50 mmt, up 54 percent from last week. Net **soybean export sales** were 0.49 mmt, up 59 percent from last week. Net weekly **wheat export sales** were –0.094 mmt, down 216 percent from last week.

Rail

U.S. Class I railroads originated 23,700 **grain carloads** during the week ending April 13. This was a 10-percent decrease from the previous week, 3 percent fewer than last year, and 4 percent fewer than the 3-year average.

Average April **shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers** (per car) were $25 above tariff for the week ending April 18. This was $88 more than last week. There were no shuttle bids/offers this week last year. Average non-shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers per car were $300 above tariff. This was $75 less than last week. There were no non-shuttle bids/offers this week last year.

Barge

For the week ending April 20, **barged grain movements** totaled 462,826 tons. This was 7 percent less than the previous week and 30 percent less than the same period last year.

For the week ending April 20, 314 grain barges **moved down river**—24 fewer than last week. There were 542 grain barges **unloaded** in the New Orleans region, 1 percent more than last week.

Ocean

For the week ending April 18, 28 **oceangoing grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf—4 percent more than the same period last year. Within the next 10 days (starting April 19), 35 vessels were expected to be loaded—46 percent more than the same period last year.

As of April 18, the rate for shipping a metric ton (mt) of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was $61.75. This was 3 percent more than the previous week. The rate from the Pacific Northwest to Japan was $33.25 per mt, 6 percent more than the previous week.

Fuel

For the week ending April 22, the U.S. average **diesel price** decreased 2.3 cents from the previous week to $3.992 per gallon, 8.5 cents below the same week last year.

First-Quarter Bulk Ocean Freight Rates Rose Amid Logistical Challenges

In 2024, substantial logistical challenges—from both drought at the Panama Canal and the Red Sea conflict—erased the typical seasonal first-quarter dip in ocean freight rates. First-quarter 2024 ocean freight rates for shipping bulk grain (wheat, corn, and soybeans) from the U.S. Gulf to Japan averaged $59.82 per metric ton (mt). This rate was up 1 percent from fourth quarter 2023 to first quarter 2024 (quarter to quarter), up 17 percent from first quarter 2023 to first quarter 2024 (year to year), and up 11 percent from the 4-year, first-quarter average (see table 1 and figure 1).

From the U.S. Gulf to Europe, rates averaged $26.76 per mt—up 1 percent quarter to quarter, up 14 percent year to year, and up 38 percent from the 4-year average. From the Pacific Northwest (PNW) to Japan, rates averaged $31.96 per mt—up 4 percent quarter to quarter, up 13 percent year to year, and up 7 percent from the 4-year average.

This article examines monthly rate changes during the first quarter, as well as current rates and possible future trends.

Monthly Changes in Rates

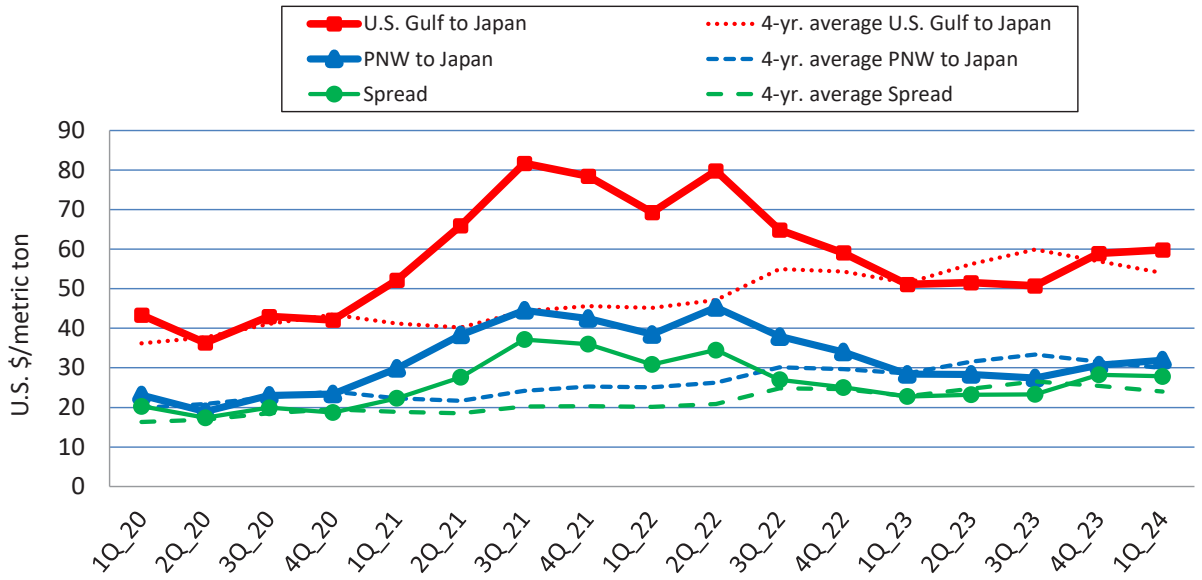
January. Despite exceeding the 4-year average rate for January, January 2024 ocean freight rates did fall slightly mid-month, from $60.75 to $57.75. However, January rates rose again, to $59.00, when Chinese manufacturers restocked

Table 1. Ocean freight rates for grain routes during first quarter 2024

Route	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	1st quarter 2024	Change from		
					4th qtr. '23	1st qtr. '23	4-yr. avg.
	--$/mt--			--$/mt--	Percent		
U.S. Gulf to Japan	58.81	58.95	61.69	59.82	1	17	11
PNW to Japan	31.06	31.50	33.31	31.96	4	13	7
Spread	27.75	27.45	28.38	27.86	-1	23	16
U.S. Gulf to Europe	29.88	29.65	29.75	29.76	1	14	38

Note: qtr. = quarter; avg. = average; mt = metric ton; yr. = year; PNW = Pacific Northwest.
Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting.

Figure 1. Grain vessel rates and spread, United States to Japan, 2020-24



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

inventories ahead of the Chinese Lunar Year celebrations. China began the year with robust imports of coal and iron ore.

In January, China imported 27.9 million tons of seaborne thermal coal—down 3.8 million tons from the previous month, but up 7.4 million tons from January 2023. The sizable increase from the previous year was driven by falling prices for seaborne coal grades, a wintertime surge in demand for electricity, and lower-than-usual hydropower generation.

At 112.6 million metric tons (mmt), China's estimated iron ore imports for January exceeded the country's 100.9 mmt of iron ore imports in the previous month and approached the record high of 112.6 mmt set in July 2020.

February. Departing from their usual January-to-February dip, rates stayed unusually high in February: ton-mile demand rose as vessels were rerouted through the Cape of Good Hope to avoid the Red Sea conflict (GTR, January 18, 2024). Also, Chinese steel makers' restocking efforts before and after the week-long Lunar Year holiday kept China's iron ore imports strong—further elevating vessel demand and freight rates. According to the customs data, China imported 209.5 million metric tons (mmt) of iron ore during January-February, versus 194 mmt for the same 2023 period—an 8.1-percent increase.

China's coal demand remained high as the country's coal inventory fell. At 5.1 million tons, China's coal inventory in February was down both from the previous month and from February 2023. In January and February—adding upward pressure on vessel demand and freight rates—China's coal imports were 74.5 mmt, up 23 percent from the same period a year ago.

March. Freight rates continued to rise in March as Brazilian's soybean export season began and further raised demand for vessels (table 1). Despite the massive drought-driven crop losses in Brazil's center-west states—especially, Matto Grosso—Brazil still exported more soybeans in March than in February. Brazil's soybean exports in March were estimated at 12.6 million tons.

March freight rates were also elevated, in part, by the ongoing crisis in the Red Sea and continued drought-induced draft and transit restrictions in the Panama Canal (GTR, November 23, 2023). However, in March, the Panama Canal Authority (PCA) finally began to ease its restrictions: as of March 8, PCA had increased the daily transit slots to 27: 7 through the Neopanamax locks and 20 through the Panamax locks.

The Panamax locks' normal transit capacity is 34-36 vessels per day and, in the Neopanamax locks, 9-11 vessels per day—depending on vessel mix, transit restrictions, and other factors. The maximum sustainable capacity of the Panama Canal (Panamax and Neopanamax locks) is about 38 vessels per day.

Current Market Analysis and Outlook

As of April 18, 2024, the rate for shipping 1 mt of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was $61.25—2 percent more than the first available rate at the beginning of the year and 13 percent more than the same period in 2023. The rate from PNW to Japan was $33.25 per mt—5 percent more than the first available rate at the beginning of the year and 11 percent more than the same period in 2023.

Although the Panama Canal and Red Sea situations continue to put upward pressure on rates, ample vessel availability over the past 4 weeks has mitigated these effects. In the second quarter, the rising capacity of the vessel fleet could continue to push down the ocean freight rates or slow their rate of increase. As of March, the global dry bulk operating fleet capacity was estimated at 1,009.3 million deadweight tons (mdwt), versus 875.7 mdwt in December 2019—a 15-percent increase (table 2).

Also, beginning May 16, as Panama approaches the end of its dry season, PCA plans to further ease its restrictions, raising its maximum daily transits in the Panamax locks from 20 to 24. On June 1, PCA will raise its maximum daily transits in the Neopanamax locks from 7 to 8, resulting in 32 total daily transits. Effective June 15, the maximum authorized draft for vessels transiting the Neopanamax locks will increase from 44 feet to 45 feet. (The normal draft level for the Neopanamax locks is 50 feet.)

A recent downpour received by the Gatun Lake has caused an uptick in traffic over the past few days. Transits are currently 60 percent of 2022, when the conditions were considered more or less normal. Transits of product tankers and container ships have almost recovered, approaching close to 90 percent of normal capacity. Total oceangoing transits in March were 747 vessels, versus 702 in January—a 6-percent increase.

PCA recently proposed a 6-year project that would dam the nearby Indio River and connect it with a 5-mile mountain tunnel to Gatun Lake. The project would cost $2 billion and is estimated to allow 11 to 15 additional transits per day through the Canal. This additional infrastructure would partly buffer Panama Canal traffic (and freight rates) from the effects of future Panamanian droughts.

Surajudeen.olowolayemo@usda.gov

Table 2. Global dry bulk operating fleet, December 2019-23 and March 2024

Type of vessel		Size (dwt)	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		As of March 2024	
			No. of Vessels	Capacity mdwt	No. of Vessels	Capacity mdwt	No. of Vessels	Capacity mdwt	No. of Vessels	Capacity mdwt	No. of Vessels	Capacity mdwt	No. of Vessels	Capacity mdwt
Handysize	Small Handy	10,000-24,999	1,151	19.8	1,157	19.9	1,226	21.0	1,344	22.9	1,436	24.3	1,440	24.4
	Mid-size Handy	25,000-34,999	1,564	48.3	1,553	48.0	1,552	48.0	1,560	48.2	1,566	48.4	1,566	48.4
	Large Handy	35,000-39.999	939	35.2	986	37.0	1,010	37.9	1,036	38.9	1,063	39.9	1,071	40.2
	Cement Carrier	Cement capable	84	1.3	86	1.3	88	1.4	87	1.4	84	1.3	84	1.3
Supramax	Handymax	40,000-49,999	685	31.6	664	30.6	684	31.5	724	33.2	735	33.6	746	34.0
	Traditional Supramax	50,000-59,999	2,081	115.6	2,085	115.8	2,092	116.2	2,108	117.0	2,137	118.7	2,142	118.9
	Ultramax	60,000-69,999	915	57.2	1,039	65.0	1,116	69.9	1,198	75.0	1,300	81.5	1,328	83.3
Panamax	Traditional Panamax	60,000-69,999	1,142	84.9	1,160	86.1	1,154	85.6	1,165	86.4	1,158	85.8	1,159	85.9
	Post Panamax	79,000-99,000	487	44.4	510	46.5	537	48.9	580	52.5	615	55.5	619	55.9
	Kamsamax	79,000-99,000	1,109	90.5	1,233	100.6	1,306	106.6	1,368	111.7	1,451	118.6	1,475	120.5
Capesize/ VLOC	Mini Capesize	100,000-129,999	137	15.4	144	16.1	153	17.1	155	17.4	160	17.9	160	17.9
	Standard Capesize	130,000-199,000	1,081	192.0	1,086	193.1	1,091	194.2	1,091	194.4	1,113	198.5	1,116	199.1
	Large Capesize	200,000+	307	64.4	363	76.1	412	86.3	435	91.2	462	96.8	472	98.9
	VLOC	200,000+	247	75.1	246	76.0	254	78.8	259	80.4	259	80.4	259	80.4
Total			**11,929**	**875.7**	**12,312**	**912.1**	**12,675**	**943.4**	**13,110**	**970.6**	**13,539**	**1,001.4**	**13,637**	**1,009.3**

Note: VLOC = very large ore carrier.
Source: Drewry Shipping Consultants.

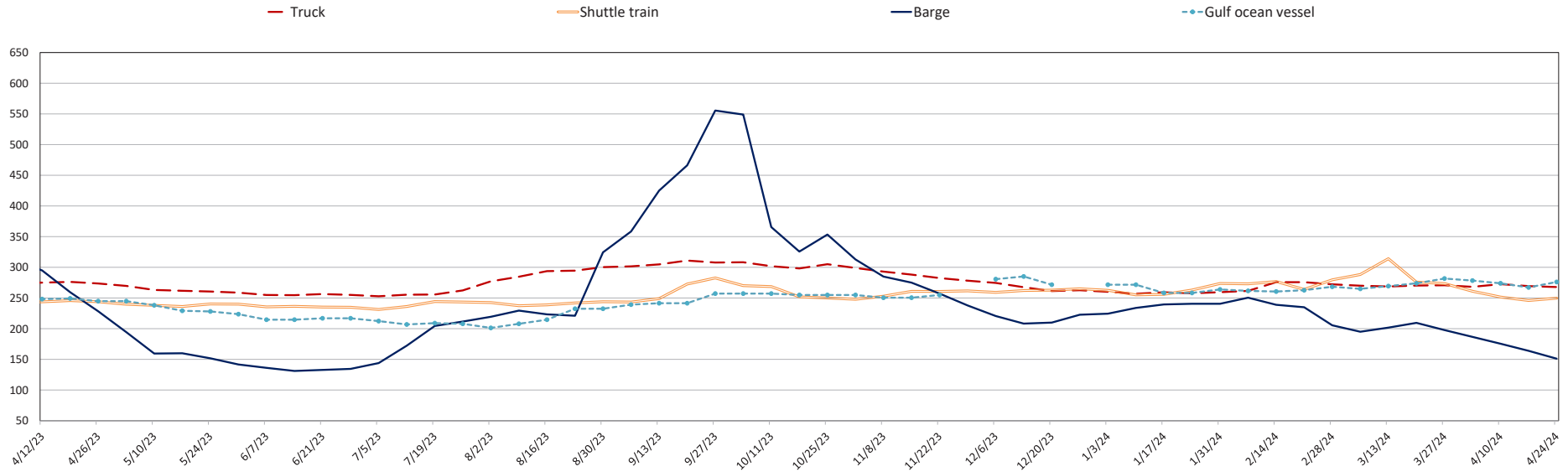
Grains are transported to the domestic and international markets via one or a combination of the following modes: truck, rail, barge and ocean-going vessel. Monitoring the cost of transportation for each mode is vital to the marketing decision making process.

Table 1. Grain transport cost indicators

For the week ending:	Truck	Rail		Barge	Ocean	
		Non-shuttle	Shuttle		Gulf	Pacific
04/24/24	268	333	250	151	276	236
04/17/24	269	337	246	164	267	222
04/26/23	274	325	244	228	245	213

Note: Indicator: Base year 2000 = 100. Weekly updates include truck = diesel ($/gallon); rail = near-month secondary rail market bid and monthly tariff rate with fuel surcharge ($/car); barge = Illinois River barge rate (index = percent of tariff rate); ocean = routes to Japan ($/metric ton); n/a = not available.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

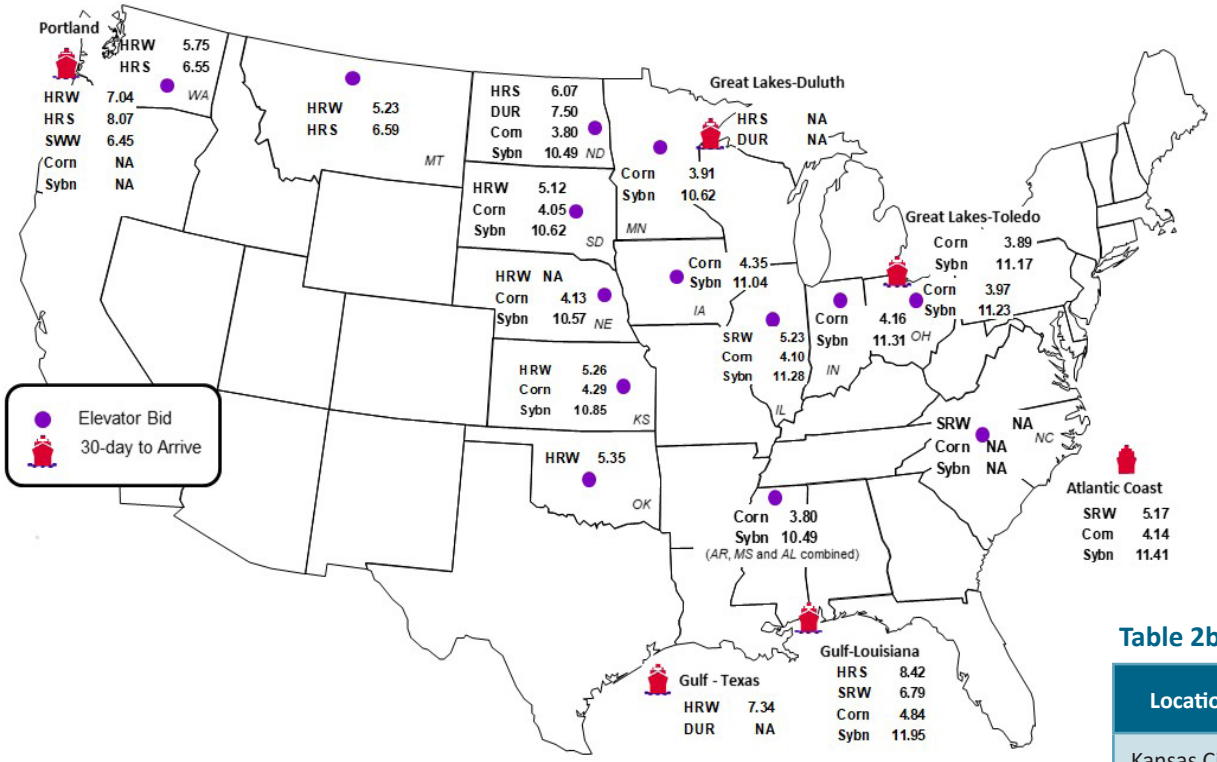
Figure 1. Grain transportation cost indicators as of week ending 4/24/24



Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 2. Grain bid summary

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



Inland bids: 12% HRW, 14% HRS, #1 SRW, #1 DUR, #1 SWW, #2 Y Corn, #1 Y Soybeans
Export bids: Ord HRW, 14% HRS, #2 SRW, #2 DUR, #2 SWW, #2 Y Corn, #1 Soybeans
Note: HRW = Hard red winter wheat, HRS = Hard red spring wheat, SRW = Soft red winter wheat, DUR = Durum, SWW = Soft white winter wheat, Y = Yellow, Ord = Ordinary. Data from tables 2a and 2b derived from map information.
Sources: U.S. Inland: GeoGrain, USDA Weekly Bids, U.S. Export: Corn & Soybean - Export Grain Bids, AMS, USDA Wheat Bids - Weekly Wheat Report, U.S. Wheat Associates, Washington, DC.

Table 2a. Market update: U.S. origins to export position price spreads ($/bushel)

Commodity	Origin–destination	4/19/2024	4/12/2024
Corn	IL–Gulf	-0.74	-0.75
Corn	NE–Gulf	-0.71	-0.73
Soybean	IA–Gulf	-0.91	-1.04
HRW	KS–Gulf	-2.08	-2.00
HRS	ND–Portland	-2.00	-2.03

Note: nq = no quote; n/a = not available; HRW = hard red winter wheat; HRS = hard red spring wheat.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 2b. Futures

Location	Grain	Month	4/19/2024	Week ago 4/12/2024	Year ago 4/21/2023
Kansas City	Wheat	May	5.946	5.866	8.280
Minneapolis	Wheat	May	6.470	6.426	8.526
Chicago	Wheat	May	5.794	5.500	6.750
Chicago	Corn	May	4.446	4.320	6.096
Chicago	Soybean	May	11.600	11.612	14.506

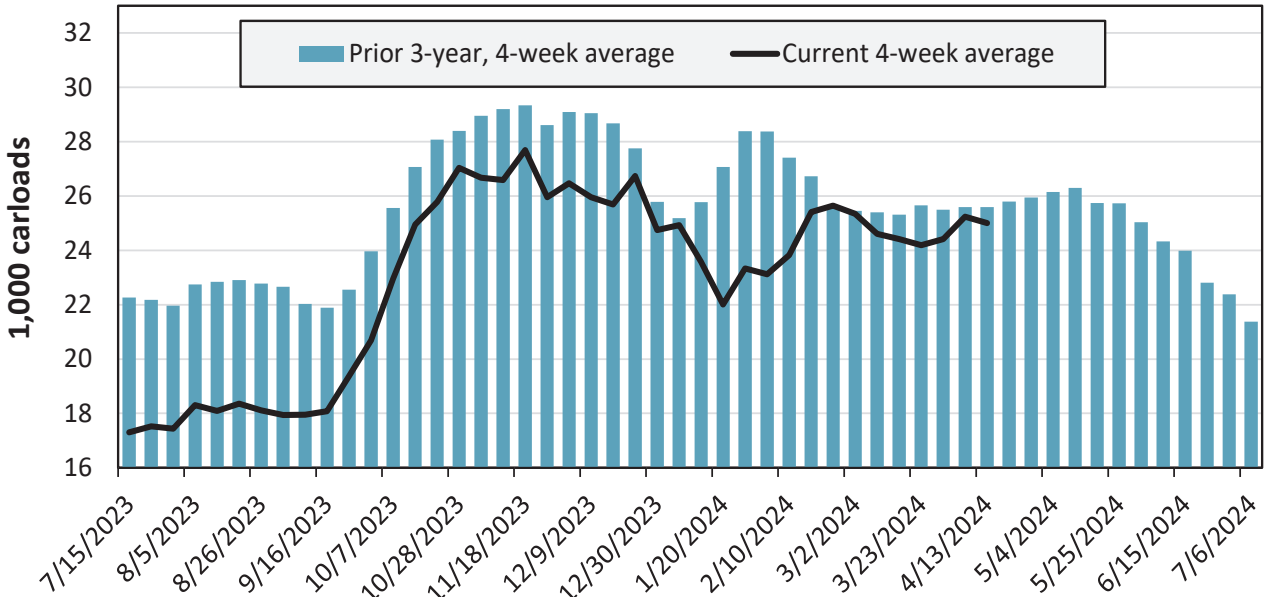
Sources: U.S. Inland: GeoGrain, USDA Weekly Bids, U.S. Export: Corn & Soybean - Export Grain Bids, AMS, USDA Wheat Bids - Weekly Wheat Report, U.S. Wheat Associates, Washington, DC.

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

For the week ending: 4/13/2024	East		West		Central U.S.		U.S. total
	CSXT	NS	BNSF	UP	CPKC	CN	
This week	1,463	2,267	11,365	5,296	2,761	548	23,700
This week last year	2,060	2,360	9,901	6,116	2,785	1,253	24,475
2024 YTD	24,842	40,217	161,579	80,347	44,978	15,535	367,498
2023 YTD	30,744	39,697	148,156	86,016	35,967	23,746	364,326
2024 YTD as % of 2023 YTD	81	101	109	93	125	65	101
Last 4 weeks as % of 2023	72	108	125	102	138	58	110
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr. avg.	77	105	100	99	117	52	98
Total 2023	92,754	130,762	499,462	278,079	131,352	66,535	1,198,944

Note: The last 4-week percentages compare the last 4 weeks of this year to the closest 4 weeks of last year, and to the average across the prior 3 years. NS = Norfolk Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City; YTD = year-to-date; avg. = average; yr. = year. CPKC and CN report carloads for their U.S.-operations only, so the U.S. total reflects originated carloads for all six Class I railroads.
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Figure 3. Total weekly U.S. Class I railroad grain carloads



Source: Surface Transportation Board.

For the 4 weeks ending April 13, grain carloads were down 1 percent from the previous week, up 10 percent from last year, and down 2 percent from the 3-year average.

Table 4a. Rail service metrics—grain unit train origin dwell times and train speeds

For the week ending: 4/13/2024		East		West		Central U.S.			U.S. Average
		CSX	NS	BNSF	UP	CN	CP	KCS	
Grain unit train origin dwell times (hours)	This week	38.6	33.4	18.3	17.1	5.0	14.6	43.8	24.4
	Average over last 4 weeks	40.4	34.9	22.4	15.3	5.0	14.0	26.1	22.6
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	27.7	45.8	33.6	19.2	13.8	69.0	8.5	31.1
Grain unit train speeds (miles per hour)	This week	23.4	19.3	25.4	23.1	24.1	21.1	27.4	23.4
	Average over last 4 weeks	23.2	17.8	25.1	22.9	24.4	23.2	27.2	23.4
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	23.9	14.4	25.5	22.3	22.9	22.8	25.3	22.4

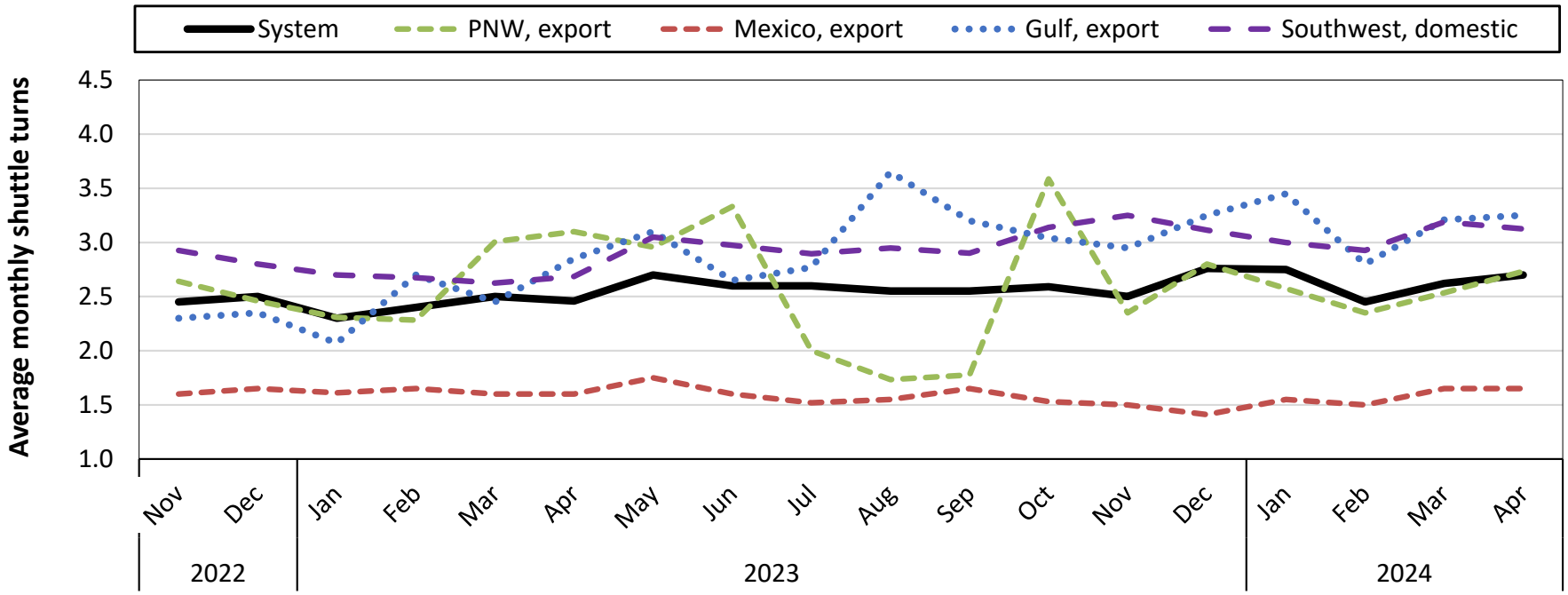
Note: NS = Norfolk Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CP = Canadian Pacific; KCS = Kansas City Southern. Although CP and KCS have merged to form CPKC, the service metrics are reported for two legacy networks that correspond to the old nomenclature (CP and KCS).
These service metrics are published weekly on the Surface Transportation Board's website and on AgTransport. For more information on each service metric, see 49 CFR § 1250.2.
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

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

For the week ending: 4/13/2024		East		West		Central U.S.			U.S. Total
		CSX	NS	BNSF	UP	CN	CP	KCS	
Empty grain cars not moved in over 48 hours (number)	This week	13	2	437	93	3	39	39	625
	Average over last 4 weeks	24	7	491	90	2	38	22	675
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	12	18	1,047	100	8	110	50	1,345
Loaded grain cars not moved in over 48 hours (number)	This week	14	264	649	78	3	47	22	1,078
	Average over last 4 weeks	15	294	709	77	3	68	22	1,188
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	14	496	1,097	115	10	325	46	2,103
Grain unit trains held (number)	This week	0	4	18	5	0	4	6	38
	Average over last 4 weeks	1	3	17	5	0	2	6	34
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	1	5	10	14	0	1	2	32
Unfilled grain car orders (number)	This week	4	0	4,395	229	0	154	0	4,782
	Average over last 4 weeks	2	4	6,184	551	0	477	0	7,217
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	7	0	3,284	1,302	0	235	0	4,827

Note: NS = Norfolk Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CP = Canadian Pacific; KCS = Kansas City Southern. Although CP and KCS have merged to form CPKC, the service metrics are reported for two legacy networks that correspond to the old nomenclature (CP and KCS).
These service metrics are published weekly on the Surface Transportation Board's website and on AgTransport. For more information on each service metric, see 49 CFR § 1250.2.
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Figure 4. Average monthly turns for grain shuttle trains, by region

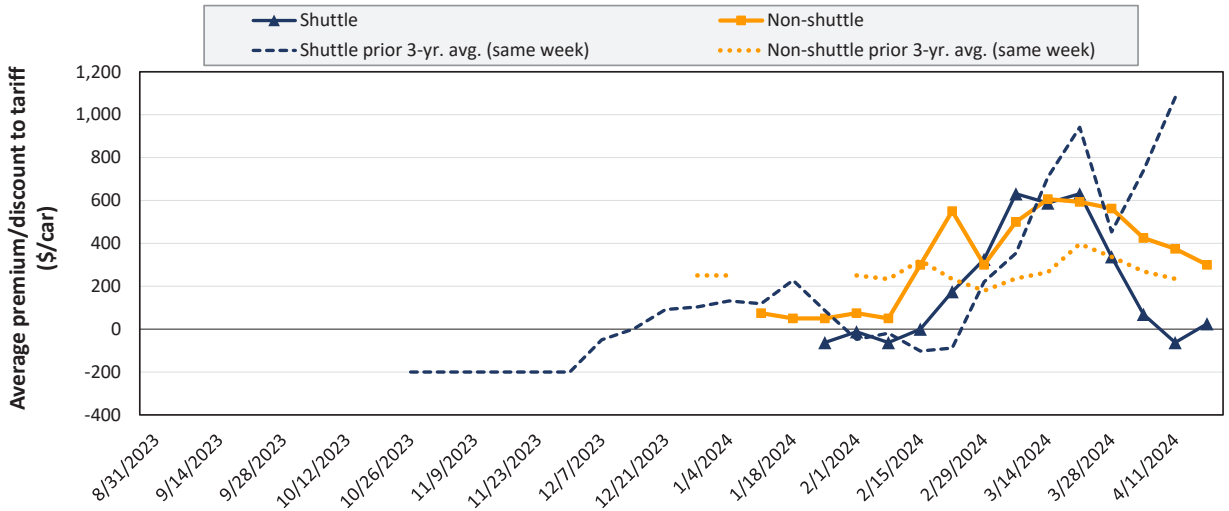


Average monthly system-wide grain shuttle turns reported in the first week of April 2024 were 2.7. By destination region, average monthly grain shuttle turns were 2.73 to PNW, 1.65 to Mexico, 3.25 to the Gulf, and 3.13 to the Southwest.

Note: Data is submitted in the first weekly report of each month, covering the previous month. A "shuttle turn" refers to the number of trips completed per month by a single train. Numbers reflect averages of the three railroads with a shuttle train program: BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad; and CPKC. CPKC only reports values for the Pacific Northwest (PNW). Regions are not standardized and vary across railroads. "Southwest" refers to domestic destinations and includes: "West Texas, Arkansas/Texas, California/Arizona, and California."
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Railroads periodically auction guaranteed grain car service for an individual trip or a period of time (e.g., one year). This ordering system is referred to as the "primary market." Once grain shippers acquire guaranteed freight on the primary market, they can trade that freight with other shippers through a broker. These transactions are referred to as the "secondary market." Secondary rail values are indicators of rail service quality and demand/supply. The values published herein are market indicators only and do not represent guaranteed prices.

Figure 5. Secondary market bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in April 2024



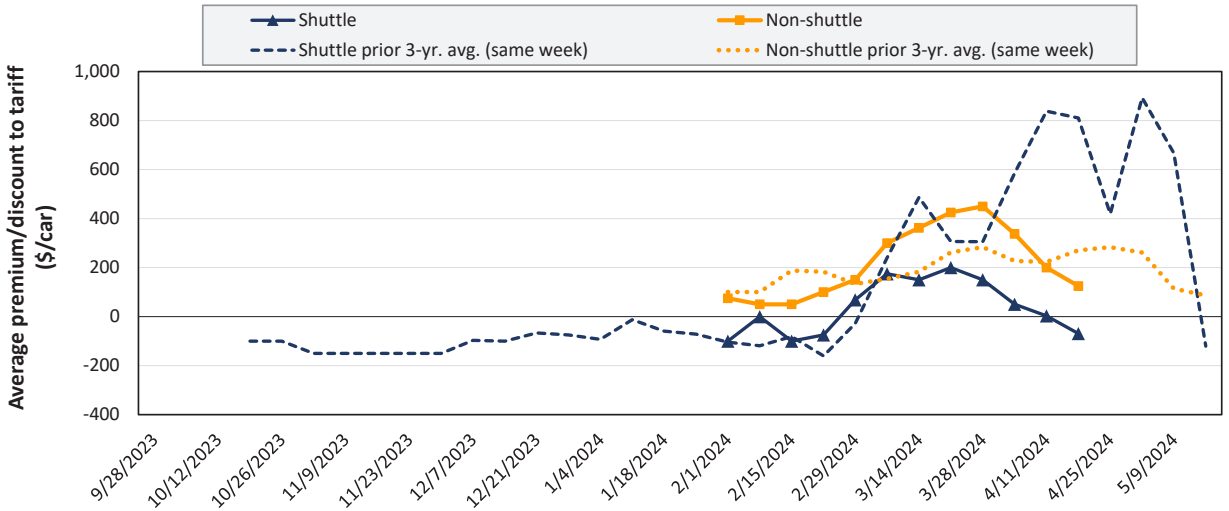
Average non-shuttle bids/offers fell $75 this week, and are $306 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers rose $88 this week and are $606 below the peak.

4/18/2024	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$300	n/a
Shuttle	$0	$50

Note: Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of data from Tradewest Brokerage Company and the Malsam Company.

Figure 6. Secondary market bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in May 2024



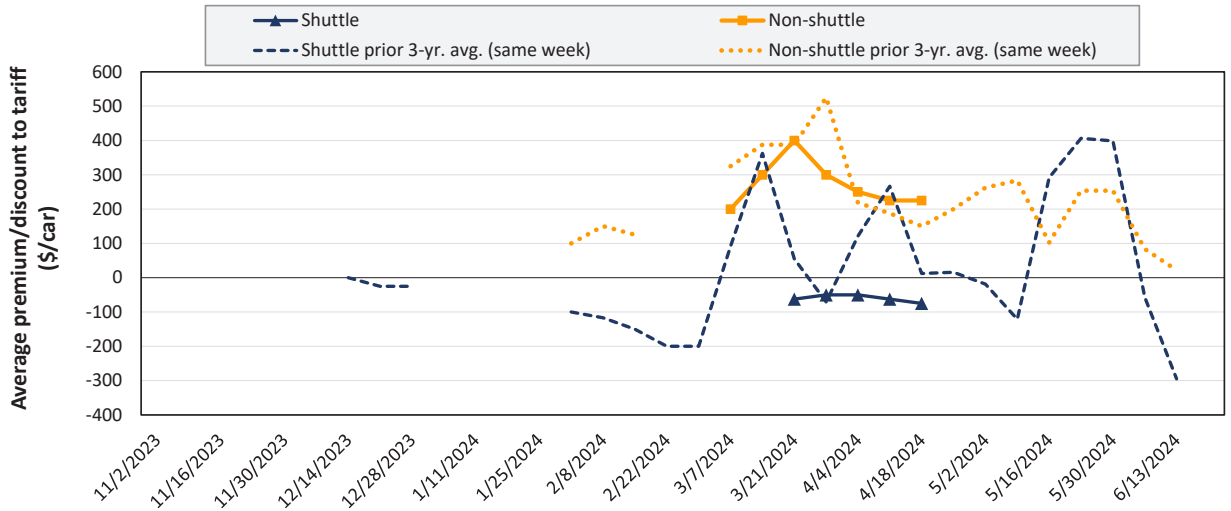
Average non-shuttle bids/offers fell $75 this week, and are $325 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers fell $72 this week and are $269 below the peak.

4/18/2024	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$200	$50
Shuttle	$0	-$138

Note: Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of data from Tradewest Brokerage Company and the Malsam Company.

Figure 7. Secondary market bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in June 2024



Average non-shuttle bids/offers are unchanged this week, and are $175 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers fell $13 this week and are $25 below the peak.

4/18/2024	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$250	$200
Shuttle	-$75	n/a

Note: Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available; avg. = average; yr. = year; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of data from Tradewest Brokerage Company and the Malsam Company.

Table 5. Weekly secondary railcar market (dollars per car)

For the week ending: 4/18/2024		Delivery period					
		Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
Non-shuttle	BNSF	300	200	250	150	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	-75	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	n/a	125	150	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP	n/a	50	200	200	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	n/a	-150	0	0	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	n/a	-125	0	0	n/a	n/a
Shuttle	BNSF	0	0	-75	n/a	-125	-125
	Change from last week	0	-6	-12	n/a	50	-25
	Change from same week 2023	n/a	92	n/a	n/a	75	-167
	UP	50	-138	n/a	n/a	0	n/a
	Change from last week	175	-138	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	n/a	183	n/a	n/a	200	n/a
	CPKC	-50	-50	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	0	75	-50	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	n/a	50	100	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Bids and offers represent a premium/discount to tariff rates; n/a = not available; BNSF = BNSF Railway; UP = Union Pacific Railroad; CPKC = Canadian Pacific Kansas City.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of data from Tradewest Brokerage Company and the Malsam Company.

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

Table 6. Tariff rail rates for unit train shipments

April 2024	Origin region	Destination region	Tariff rate/car	Fuel surcharge per car	Tariff plus surcharge per metric ton	Tariff plus surcharge per bushel	Percent Change Y/Y
Wheat	Wichita, KS	St. Louis, MO	$4,095	$197	$42.63	$1.16	4
	Grand Forks, ND	Duluth-Superior, MN	$3,508	$60	$35.43	$0.96	-10
	Wichita, KS	Los Angeles, CA	$6,840	$306	$70.96	$1.93	-10
	Wichita, KS	New Orleans, LA	$4,825	$347	$51.36	$1.40	3
	Sioux Falls, SD	Galveston-Houston, TX	$6,611	$251	$68.14	$1.85	-10
	Colby, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	$5,075	$380	$54.17	$1.47	3
	Amarillo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	$5,121	$529	$56.11	$1.53	-2
Corn	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$4,000	$392	$43.62	$1.11	-2
	Toledo, OH	Raleigh, NC	$8,877	$0	$88.15	$2.24	4
	Des Moines, IA	Davenport, IA	$2,830	$83	$28.93	$0.73	6
	Indianapolis, IN	Atlanta, GA	$6,866	$0	$68.18	$1.73	4
	Indianapolis, IN	Knoxville, TN	$5,790	$0	$57.50	$1.46	4
	Des Moines, IA	Little Rock, AR	$4,425	$244	$46.37	$1.18	3
	Des Moines, IA	Los Angeles, CA	$6,305	$711	$69.67	$1.77	0
Soybeans	Minneapolis, MN	New Orleans, LA	$3,156	$580	$37.10	$1.01	-18
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	$7,269	$0	$72.18	$1.96	3
	Indianapolis, IN	Raleigh, NC	$8,169	$0	$81.12	$2.21	4
	Indianapolis, IN	Huntsville, AL	$5,921	$0	$58.80	$1.60	4
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$5,040	$392	$53.95	$1.47	2

Note: A unit train refers to shipments of at least 25 cars. Shuttle train rates are generally available for qualified shipments of 75-120 cars that meet railroad efficiency requirements. The table assumes 111 short tons (100.7 metric tons) per car, 56 pounds per bushel of corn, and 60 pounds per bushel of wheat and soybeans. Percentage change year to year (Y/Y) is calculated using the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge

Source: BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway, CSX Transportation, and Union Pacific Railroad.

Table 7. Tariff rail rates for shuttle train shipments

April 2024	Origin region	Destination region	Tariff rate/car	Fuel surcharge per car	Tariff plus surcharge per metric ton	Tariff plus surcharge per bushel	Percent Change Y/Y
Wheat	Great Falls, MT	Portland, OR	$4,043	$176	$41.90	$1.14	-9
	Wichita, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	$4,111	$137	$42.18	$1.15	-6
	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	$7,413	$0	$73.61	$2.00	5
	Grand Forks, ND	Portland, OR	$5,701	$304	$59.63	$1.62	-8
	Grand Forks, ND	Galveston-Houston, TX	$5,146	$312	$54.20	$1.48	-7
	Colby, KS	Portland, OR	$5,923	$624	$65.01	$1.77	-2
Corn	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$5,660	$370	$59.88	$1.52	-3
	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	$5,620	$339	$59.18	$1.50	-3
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$4,345	$392	$47.04	$1.20	2
	Lincoln, NE	Galveston-Houston, TX	$4,560	$198	$47.25	$1.20	2
	Des Moines, IA	Amarillo, TX	$4,845	$307	$51.16	$1.30	2
	Minneapolis, MN	Tacoma, WA	$5,660	$367	$59.85	$1.52	-3
	Council Bluffs, IA	Stockton, CA	$5,780	$380	$61.17	$1.55	0
Soybeans	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	$6,335	$339	$66.28	$1.80	-3
	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$6,385	$370	$67.08	$1.83	-3
	Fargo, ND	Tacoma, WA	$6,235	$301	$64.91	$1.77	-2
	Council Bluffs, IA	New Orleans, LA	$5,270	$452	$56.83	$1.55	1
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	$5,509	$0	$54.71	$1.49	4
	Grand Island, NE	Portland, OR	$5,905	$638	$64.98	$1.77	1

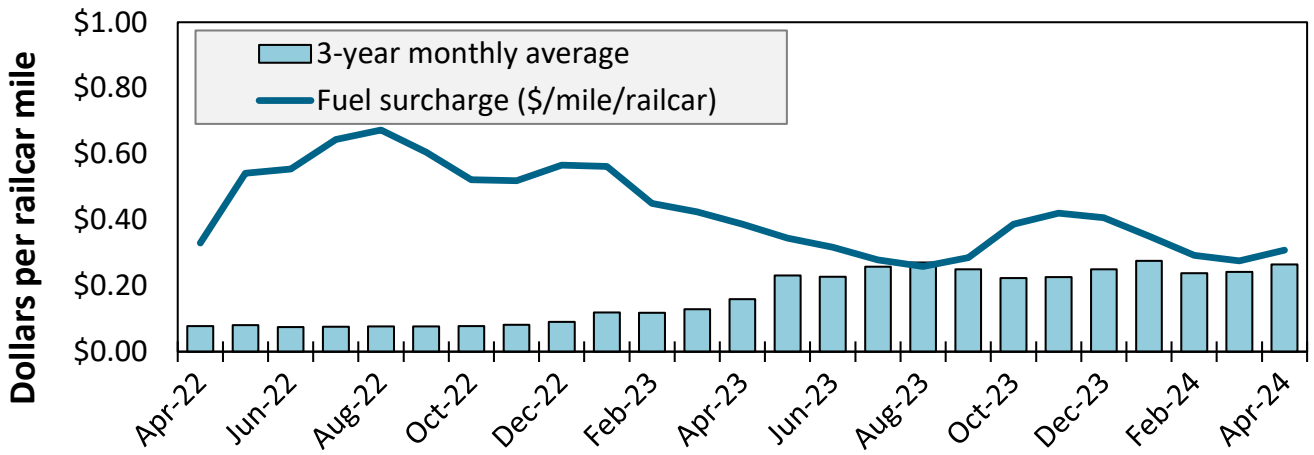
Note: A unit train refers to shipments of at least 25 cars. Shuttle train rates are generally available for qualified shipments of 75-120 cars that meet railroad efficiency requirements. The table assumes 111 short tons (100.7 metric tons) per car, 56 pounds per bushel of corn, and 60 pounds per bushel of wheat and soybeans. Percentage change year to year (Y/Y) is calculated using the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge.
Source: BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway, CSX Transportation, and Union Pacific Railroad.

Table 8. Tariff rail rates for U.S. bulk grain shipments to Mexico

December 2021	Origin state	Destination region	Tariff rate per car	Fuel surcharge per car	Tariff rate plus fuel surcharge per:		Percent change Y/Y
					metric ton	bushel	
Wheat	MT	Chihuahua, CI	$7,699	$0	$78.67	$2.14	4
	OK	Cuautitlan, EM	$6,900	$230	$72.85	$1.98	6
	KS	Guadalajara, JA	$7,619	$719	$85.19	$2.32	7
	TX	Salinas Victoria, NL	$4,420	$138	$46.57	$1.27	4
Corn	IA	Guadalajara, JA	$9,102	$663	$99.77	$2.53	6
	SD	Celaya, GJ	$8,300	$0	$84.81	$2.15	2
	NE	Queretaro, QA	$8,322	$462	$89.75	$2.28	5
	SD	Salinas Victoria, NL	$6,905	$0	$70.55	$1.79	0
	MO	Tlalnepantla, EM	$7,687	$450	$83.14	$2.11	5
	SD	Torreon, CU	$7,825	$0	$79.95	$2.03	2
Soybeans	MO	Bojay (Tula), HG	$8,647	$614	$94.63	$2.57	5
	NE	Guadalajara, JA	$9,207	$646	$100.67	$2.74	5
	IA	El Castillo, JA	$9,510	$0	$97.17	$2.64	1
	KS	Torreon, CU	$8,109	$466	$87.61	$2.38	5
Sorghum	NE	Celaya, GJ	$7,932	$597	$87.15	$2.21	6
	KS	Queretaro, QA	$8,108	$287	$85.77	$2.18	3
	NE	Salinas Victoria, NL	$6,713	$231	$70.94	$1.80	3
	NE	Torreon, CU	$7,225	$438	$78.29	$1.99	6

Note: Rates are based on published tariff rates for high-capacity shuttle trains. Shuttle trains are available for qualified shipments of 75-110 cars that meet railroad efficiency requirements. The table assumes 97.87 metric tons per car, 56 pounds per bushel for corn and sorghum, and 60 pounds per bushel for wheat and soybeans. Percentage change year over year (Y/Y) is calculated using the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge. **As of January 1, both BNSF and Union Pacific changed their billing and reporting of rates to Mexico. As we incorporate the change, table 8 updates will be delayed.**
Source: BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, Kansas City Southern.

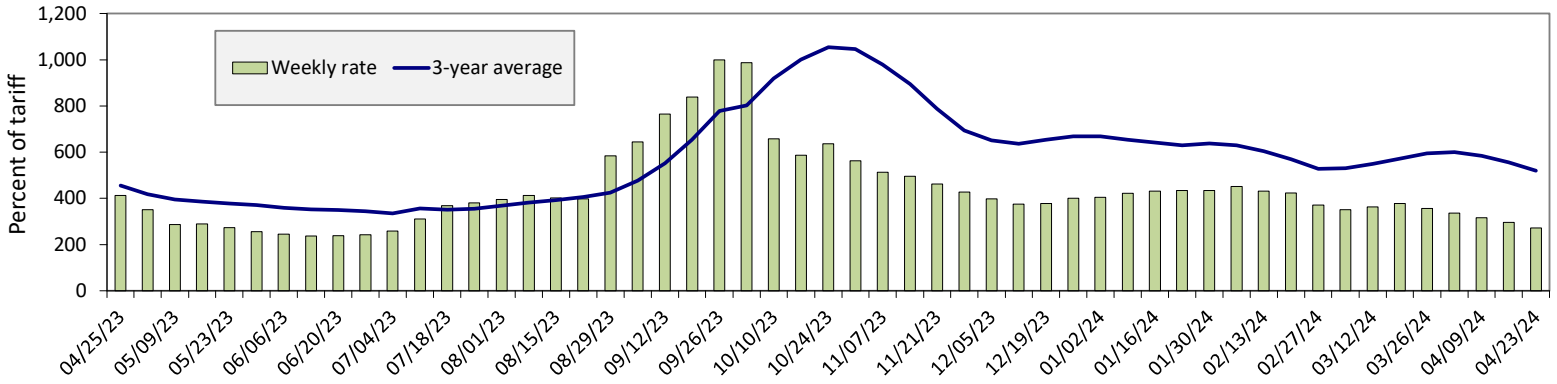
Figure 8. Railroad fuel surcharges, North American weighted average



April 2024: $0.31/mile, up 3 cents from last month's surcharge of $0.28/mile; down 8 cents from the April 2023 surcharge of $0.39/mile; and up 5 cents from the April prior 3-year average of $0.26/mile.

Note: Weighted by each Class I railroad's proportion of grain traffic for the prior year.
Source: BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway, CSX Transportation, Canadian Pacific Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, Kansas City Southern Railway, Norfolk Southern Corporation.

Figure 9. Illinois River barge freight rate



For the week ending April 23: 8 percent lower than the previous week; 34 percent lower than last year; and 48 percent lower than the 3-year average.

Note: Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); 3-year avg. = 4-week moving average of the 3-year average.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 9. Weekly barge freight rates: southbound only

Measure	Date	Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Lower Illinois River	St. Louis	Cincinnati	Lower Ohio	Cairo-Memphis
Rate	4/23/2024	317	277	272	207	237	237	201
	4/16/2024	328	303	295	217	246	246	212
$/ton	4/23/2024	19.62	14.74	12.62	8.26	11.12	9.57	6.31
	4/16/2024	20.30	16.12	13.69	8.66	11.54	9.94	6.66
Measure	**Time Period**	**Twin Cities**	**Mid-Mississippi**	**Lower Illinois River**	**St. Louis**	**Cincinnati**	**Lower Ohio**	**Cairo-Memphis**
Current week % change from the same week	Last year	n/a	n/a	-34	-33	-28	-28	-27
	3-year avg.	-47	-49	-48	-48	-48	-48	-43
Rate	May	314	276	274	209	235	235	198
	July	313	277	272	212	235	235	201

Note: Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); 3-year avg. = 4-week moving average of the 3-year avg.; ton = 2,000 pounds; n/a = data not available.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

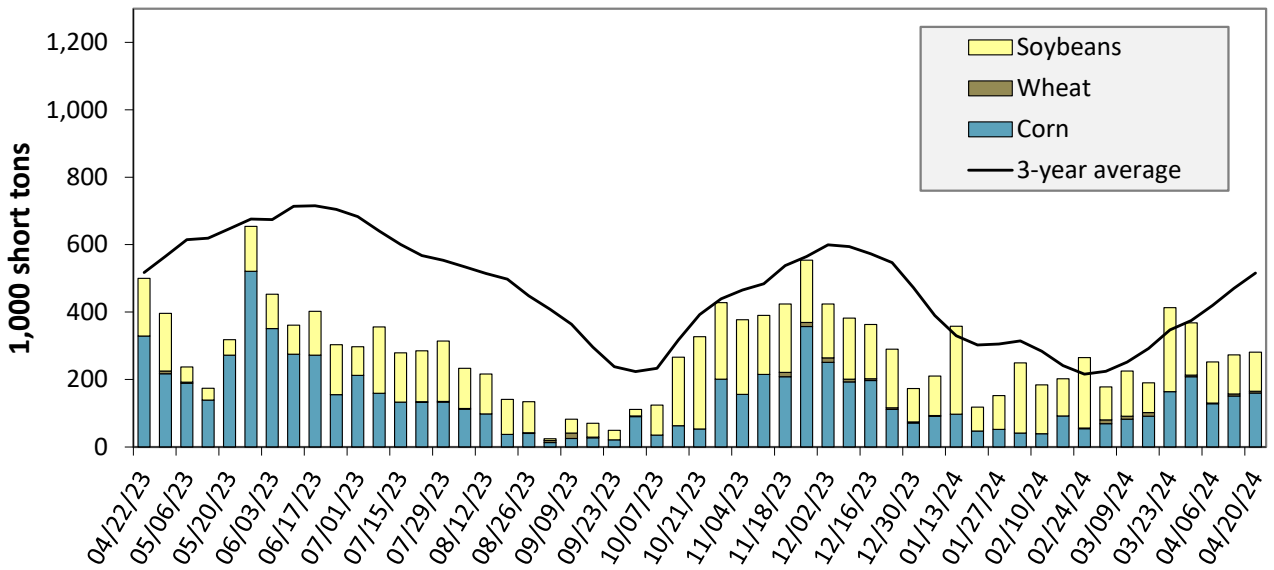
Figure 10. Benchmark tariff rates

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

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

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 11. Barge movements on the Mississippi River (Locks 27-Granite City, IL)



For the week ending April 20: 44 percent lower than last year and 46 percent lower than the 3-year average.

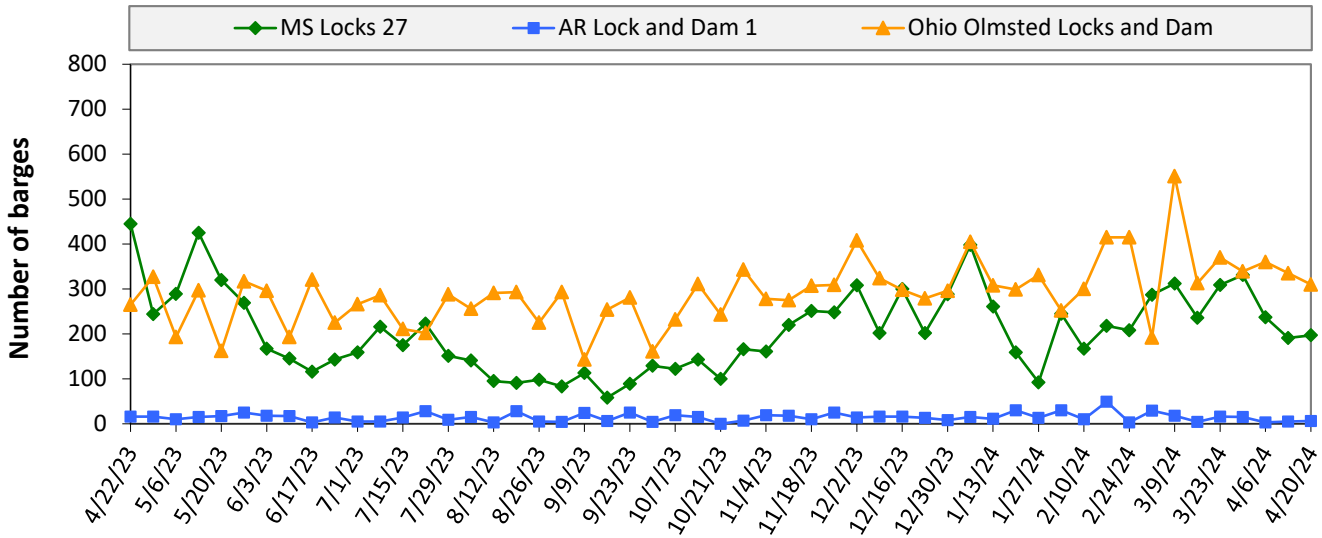
Note: The 3-year average is a 4-week moving average. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently migrated its lock and vessel database and has noted the latest data may be revised in coming weeks.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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

For the week ending 04/20/2024	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River (Rock Island, IL (L15))	44	2	41	0	86
Mississippi River (Winfield, MO (L25))	109	5	92	0	206
Mississippi River (Alton, IL (L26))	187	5	119	0	310
Mississippi River (Granite City, IL (L27))	160	5	116	0	280
Illinois River (La Grange)	68	0	22	0	90
Ohio River (Olmsted)	83	21	66	4	173
Arkansas River (L1)	0	8	1	0	10
Weekly total - 2024	242	34	183	4	463
Weekly total - 2023	427	26	198	6	657
2024 YTD	3,757	565	4,105	71	8,499
2023 YTD	4,254	414	4,504	140	9,312
2024 as % of 2023 YTD	88	136	91	51	91
Last 4 weeks as % of 2023	67	152	75	10	73
Total 2023	12,857	1,346	11,824	267	26,294

Note: “Other” refers to oats, barely, sorghum, and rye. Total may not add up due to rounding. YTD = year to date. Weekly total, YTD, and calendar year total include Mississippi River lock 27, Ohio River Olmsted lock, and Arkansas Lock 1. “L” (as in "L15") refers to a lock, locks, or lock and dam facility. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently migrated its lock and vessel database and has noted the latest data may be revised in coming weeks.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

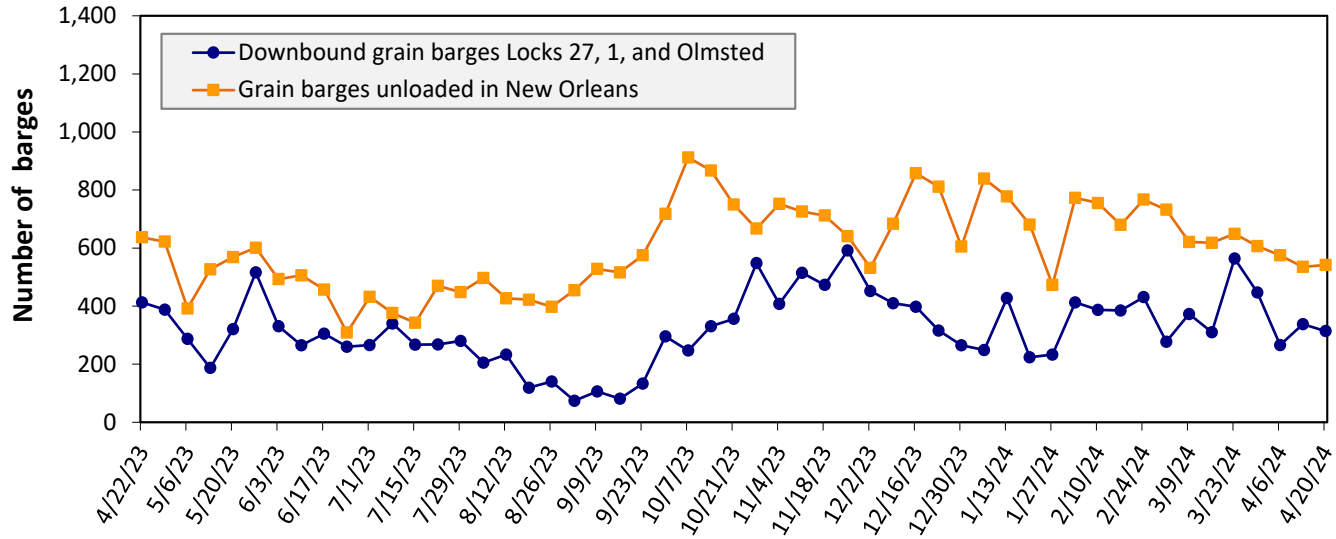
Figure 12. Upbound empty barges transiting Mississippi River Locks 27, Arkansas River Lock and Dam 1, and Ohio River Olmsted Locks and Dam



For the week ending April 20: 513 barges transited the locks, 18 barges fewer than the previous week, and 28 percent lower than the 3-year average.

Note: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently migrated its lock and vessel database and has noted the latest data may be revised in coming weeks.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Figure 13. Grain barges for export in New Orleans region



For the week ending April 20: 314 barges moved down river, 24 fewer than the previous week; 542 grain barges unloaded in the New Orleans Region, 1 percent more than the previous week.

Note: Olmsted = Olmsted Locks and Dam. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently migrated its lock and vessel database and has noted the latest data may be revised in coming weeks.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

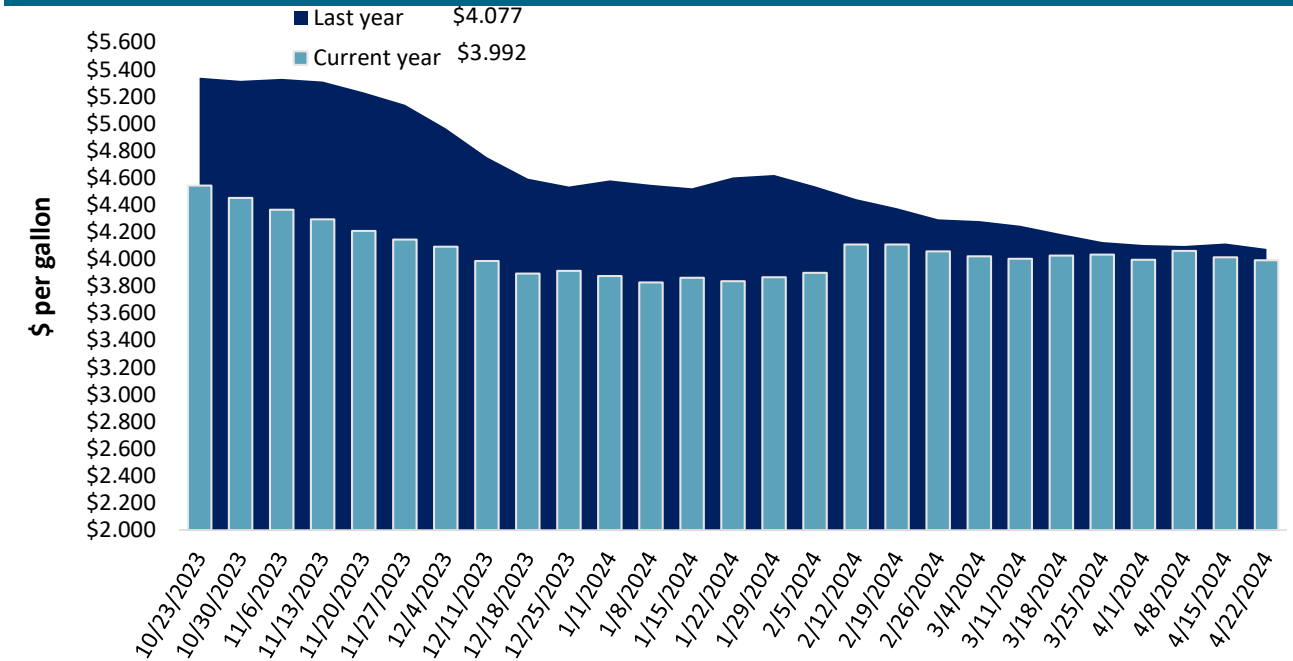
The weekly diesel price provides a proxy for trends in U.S. truck rates as diesel fuel is a significant expense for truck grain movements.

Table 11. Retail on-highway diesel prices, week ending 4/22/2024 (U.S. $/gallon)

Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	4.047	-0.021	-0.104
	New England	4.326	0.015	-0.196
	Central Atlantic	4.255	0.014	-0.190
	Lower Atlantic	3.941	-0.038	-0.063
II	Midwest	3.935	-0.030	-0.049
III	Gulf Coast	3.707	-0.003	-0.116
IV	Rocky Mountain	3.883	-0.073	-0.241
V	West Coast	4.661	-0.041	-0.031
	West Coast less California	4.154	-0.064	-0.305
	California	5.244	-0.012	0.284
Total	United States	3.992	-0.023	-0.085

Note: Diesel fuel prices include all taxes. Prices represent an average of all types of diesel fuel. On June 13, 2022, the Energy Information Administration implemented a new methodology to estimate weekly on-highway diesel fuel prices.
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration.

Figure 14. Weekly diesel fuel prices, U.S. average



For the week ending April 22, the U.S. average diesel fuel price decreased 2.3 cents from the previous week to $3.992 per gallon, 8.5 cents below the same week last year.

Note: On June 13, 2022, the Energy Information Administration implemented a new methodology to estimate weekly on-highway diesel fuel prices.
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration.

Table 12. U.S. export balances and cumulative exports (1,000 metric tons)

Grain Exports		Wheat						Corn	Soybeans	Total
		Hard red winter (HRW)	Soft red winter (SRW)	Hard red spring (HRS)	Soft white wheat (SWW)	Durum	All wheat			
Current unshipped (outstanding) export sales	For the week ending 4/11/2024	709	708	983	658	25	3,083	14,555	3,595	21,233
	This week year ago	622	376	949	606	93	2,645	15,457	4,048	22,149
	Last 4 wks. as % of same period 2022/23	140	257	132	130	44	148	104	93	108
Current shipped (cumulative) exports sales	2023/24 YTD	2,916	3,548	5,414	3,294	479	15,652	30,123	37,688	83,462
	2022/23 YTD	4,412	2,434	4,718	4,006	321	15,891	22,595	46,055	84,541
	YTD 2023/24 as % of 2022/23	66	146	115	82	149	98	133	82	99
	Total 2022/23	4,872	2,695	5,382	4,414	395	17,759	39,469	52,208	109,435
	Total 2021/22	7,172	2,786	5,254	3,261	196	18,669	59,764	57,189	135,622

Note: The marketing year for wheat is Jun. 1 to May 31 and, for corn and soybeans, Sep. 1 to Aug. 31. YTD = year-to-date; wks. = weeks.
Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 13. Top 5 importers of U.S. corn

For the week ending 4/11/2024	Total commitments (1,000 mt)		% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2020-22 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2023/24	YTD MY 2022/23		
Mexico	18,747	13,721	37	15,227
China	2,131	8,662	-75	12,616
Japan	7,920	5,095	55	10,273
Colombia	4,688	1,782	163	4,398
Korea	1,659	714	132	2,563
Top 5 importers	**35,145**	**29,973**	**17**	**45,077**
Total U.S. corn export sales	**44,678**	**38,052**	**17**	**56,665**
% of YTD current month's export projection	84%	90%	-	-
Change from prior week	501	312	-	-
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	**79%**	**79%**	**-**	**80%**
USDA forecast April 2024	**53,343**	**42,192**	**26**	**-**
Corn use for ethanol USDA forecast, April 2024	**137,160**	**131,471**	**4**	**-**

Note: The top 5 importers are based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for marketing year (MY) 2022/23 (Sep. 1 – Aug. 31). "Total commitments" = cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), from FAS weekly export sales report, or export sales query. Total commitments' change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous week's outstanding sales or accumulated sales. In rightmost column, "Exports" = carryover plus accumulated exports (as defined in FAS marketing year ranking reports).
mt = metric ton; yr. = year; avg. = average; YTD = year to date; "-" = not applicable.
Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 14. Top 5 importers of U.S. soybeans

For the week ending 4/11/2024	Total commitments (1,000 mt)		% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2020-22 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2023/24	YTD MY 2022/23		
China	23,655	31,040	-24	32,321
Mexico	4,410	4,235	4	4,912
Egypt	720	1,099	-34	2,670
Japan	1,785	1,885	-5	2,259
Indonesia	1,510	1,274	19	1,973
Top 5 importers	**32,080**	**39,532**	**-19**	**44,133**
Total U.S. soybean export sales	**41,283**	**50,103**	**-18**	**56,656**
% of YTD current month's export projection	89%	92%	-	-
Change from prior week	486	-28	-	-
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	**78%**	**79%**	**-**	**78%**
USDA forecast, April 2024	**46,266**	**54,213**	**-15**	**-**

Note: The top 5 importers are based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for marketing year (MY) 2022/23 (Sep. 1 – Aug. 31). "Total commitments" = cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), from FAS weekly export sales report, or export sales query. Total commitments' change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous week's outstanding sales or accumulated sales. In rightmost column, "Exports" = carryover plus accumulated export (as defined in FAS marketing year ranking reports). mt = metric ton; yr. = year; avg. = average; YTD = year to date; "-" = not applicable.
Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

Table 15. Top 10 importers of all U.S. wheat

For the week ending 04/11/2024	Total commitments (1,000 mt)		% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2020-22 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2023/24	YTD MY 2022/23		
Mexico	3,215	3,188	1	3,397
Philippines	2,834	2,289	24	2,615
Japan	1,953	2,101	-7	2,281
China	2,040	1,098	86	1,740
Korea	1,350	1,342	1	1,426
Nigeria	243	767	-68	1,276
Taiwan	1,101	863	28	944
Thailand	460	636	-28	643
Colombia	295	534	-45	537
Indonesia	461	345	33	469
Top 10 importers	**13,951**	**13,162**	**6**	**15,327**
Total U.S. wheat export sales	**18,735**	**18,536**	**1**	**20,411**
% of YTD current month's export projection	97%	90%	-	-
Change from prior week	-94	259	-	-
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	**74%**	**71%**	**-**	**75%**
USDA forecast, April 2024	**19,323**	**20,657**	**-6**	**-**

Note: The top 5 importers are based on USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) marketing year ranking reports for marketing year (MY) 2022/23 (Sep. 1 – Aug. 31). "Total commitments" = cumulative exports (shipped) + outstanding sales (unshipped), from FAS weekly export sales report, or export sales query. Total commitments' change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous week's outstanding sales or accumulated sales. In rightmost column, "Exports" = carryover plus accumulated export (as defined in FAS marketing year ranking reports). mt = metric ton; yr. = year; avg. = average; YTD = year to date; "-" = not applicable.
Source: USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service.

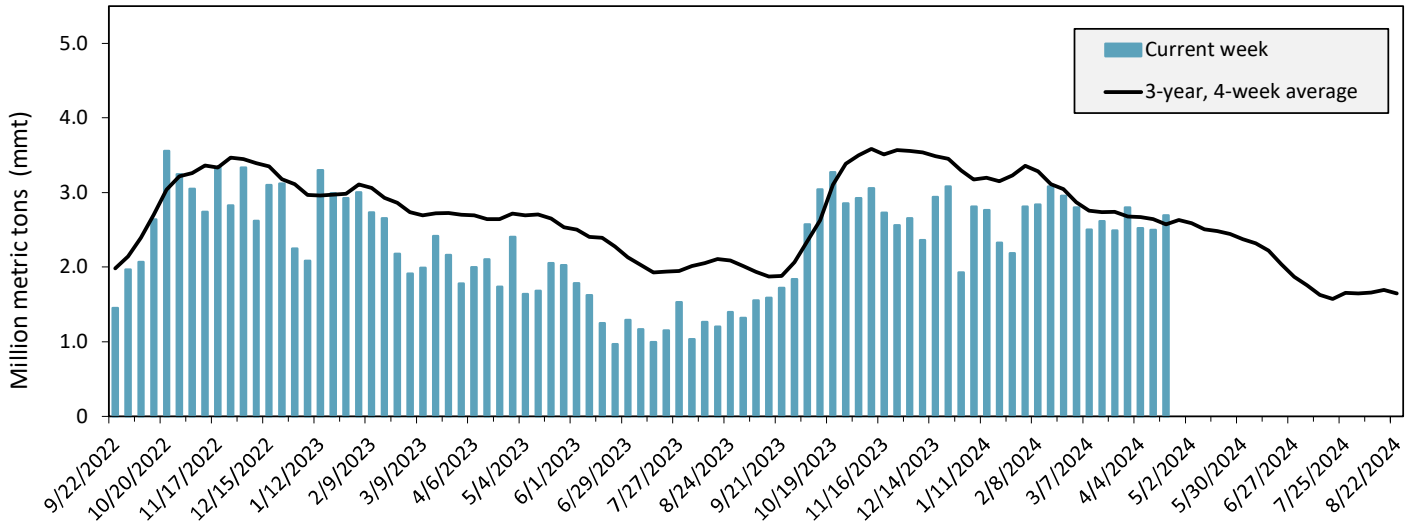
Table 16. Grain inspections for export by U.S. port region (1,000 metric tons)

Port regions	Commodity	For the week ending 04/18/2024	Previous week*	Current week as % of previous	2024 YTD*	2023 YTD*	2024 YTD as % of 2023 YTD	Last 4-weeks as % of:		2023 total*
								Last year	Prior 3-yr. avg.	
Pacific Northwest	Corn	546	501	109	5,704	1,481	385	300	169	5,267
	Soybeans	0	11	0	2,458	3,269	75	59	42	10,286
	Wheat	230	422	54	3,285	3,431	96	180	126	9,814
	All Grain	**803**	**934**	**86**	**12,137**	**8,376**	**145**	**230**	**135**	**25,913**
Mississippi Gulf	Corn	709	461	154	7,731	7,848	99	89	65	23,630
	Soybeans	297	307	97	9,542	10,956	87	74	97	26,878
	Wheat	133	98	135	1,863	846	220	263	230	3,335
	All Grain	**1,138**	**866**	**131**	**19,190**	**19,650**	**98**	**92**	**81**	**53,843**
Texas Gulf	Corn	9	28	31	168	70	241	n/a	162	397
	Soybeans	0	0	n/a	0	49	0	n/a	n/a	267
	Wheat	34	22	154	512	760	67	65	64	1,593
	All Grain	**196**	**121**	**162**	**2,105**	**1,542**	**136**	**127**	**77**	**5,971**
Interior	Corn	344	352	98	4,115	2,948	140	186	172	10,474
	Soybeans	136	125	109	2,507	2,189	115	165	118	6,508
	Wheat	43	78	55	838	771	109	109	94	2,281
	All Grain	**525**	**561**	**94**	**7,558**	**5,949**	**127**	**168**	**143**	**19,467**
Great Lakes	Corn	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	57
	Soybeans	0	0	n/a	0	29	0	n/a	n/a	192
	Wheat	11	0	n/a	60	75	80	113	171	581
	All Grain	**11**	**0**	**n/a**	**60**	**104**	**57**	**56**	**53**	**831**
Atlantic	Corn	16	12	137	145	49	296	442	242	166
	Soybeans	3	4	67	417	1,050	40	33	13	2,058
	Wheat	0	0	n/a	10	37	28	187	562	101
	All Grain	**19**	**16**	**120**	**573**	**1,137**	**50**	**96**	**40**	**2,325**
All Regions	Corn	1,624	1,354	120	17,863	12,404	144	145	103	40,004
	Soybeans	435	447	97	14,978	17,647	85	84	88	46,459
	Wheat	450	620	73	6,568	5,920	111	160	128	17,738
	All Grain	**2,693**	**2,497**	**108**	**41,676**	**36,870**	**113**	**132**	**102**	**108,664**

*Note: Data includes revisions from prior weeks; "All grain" includes corn, soybeans, wheat, sorghum, oats, barley, rye, sunflower, flaxseed, and mixed grains; "All regions" includes listed regions and other minor regions not listed; YTD= year-to-date; n/a = not available or no change.
Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

The United States exports approximately one-quarter of the grain it produces. On average, this includes nearly 45 percent of U.S.-grown wheat, 50 percent of U.S.-grown soybeans, and 20 percent of the U.S.-grown corn. Approximately 55 percent of the U.S. export grain shipments departed through the U.S. Gulf region in 2019.

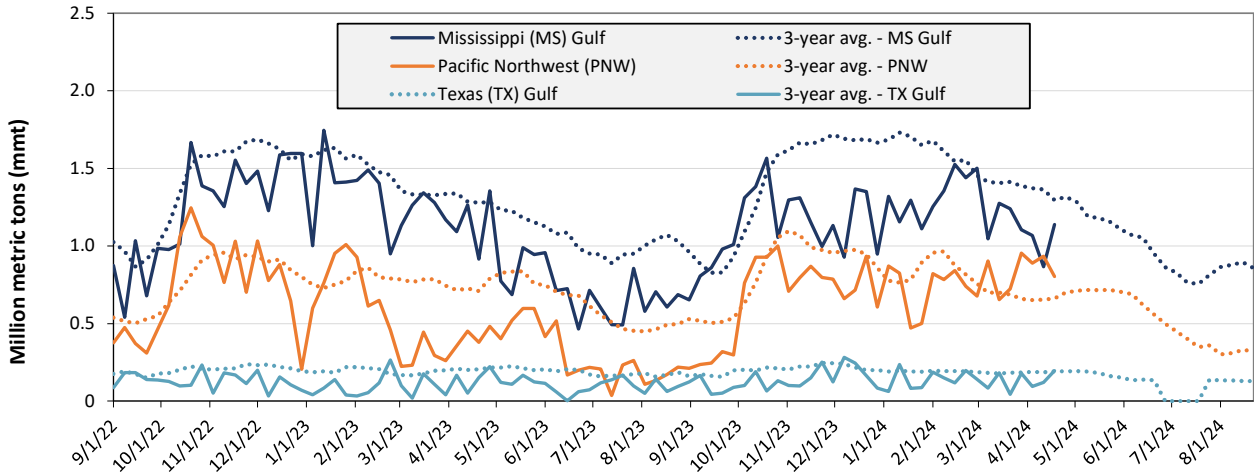
Figure 15. U.S. grain inspected for export (wheat, corn, and soybeans)



For the week ending Apr. 18: 2.7 mmt of grain inspected, up 8 percent from the previous week, up 31 percent from the same week last year, and up 5 percent from the 3-year, 4-week average.

Notes: 3-year average consists of 4-week running average.
Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Figure 16. U.S. grain inspections for U.S. Gulf and PNW (wheat, corn, and soybeans)



Week ending 04/18/24 inspections (mmt):
MS Gulf: 1.14
PNW: 0.8
TX Gulf: 0.2

Percent change from:	MS Gulf	TX Gulf	U.S. Gulf	PNW
Last week	up 31	up 62	up 35	down 14
Last year (same 7 days)	up 18	up 29	up 19	up 39
3-year average (4-week moving average)	down 12	up 2	down 10	up 21

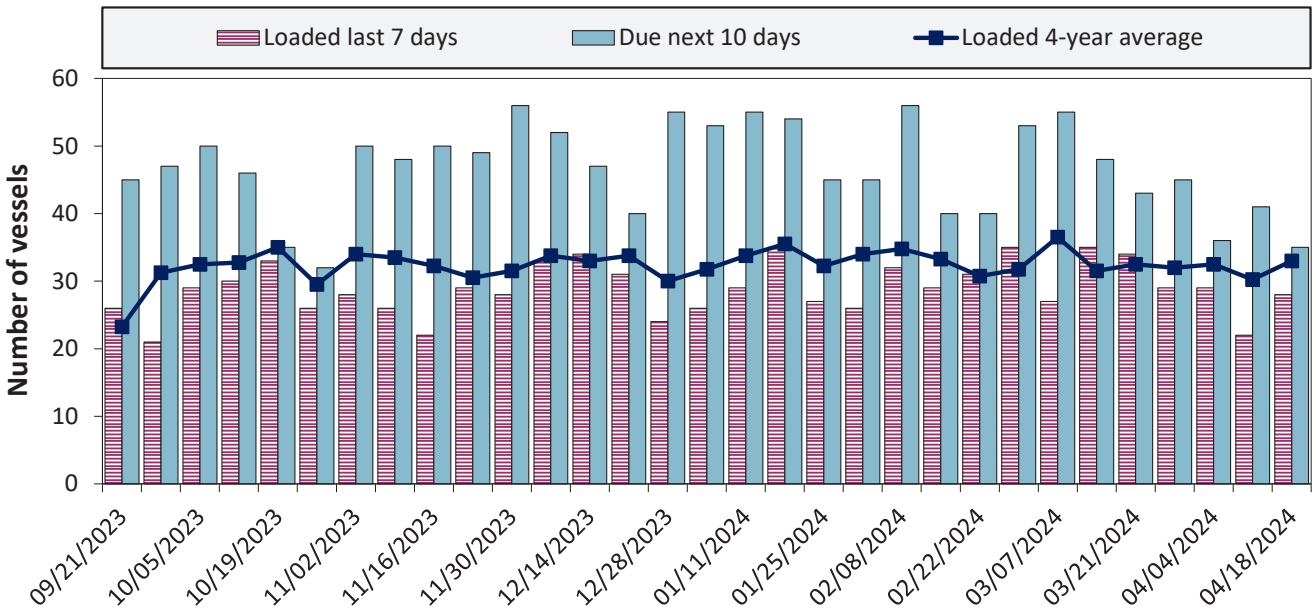
Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Table 17. Weekly port region grain ocean vessel activity (number of vessels)

Date	Gulf			Pacific Northwest
	In port	Loaded 7-days	Due next 10-days	In port
4/18/2024	22	28	35	15
4/11/2024	23	22	41	16
2023 range	(8…38)	(17…34)	(21…56)	(1…24)
2023 average	22	26	39	10

Note: The data are voluntarily submitted and may not be complete.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

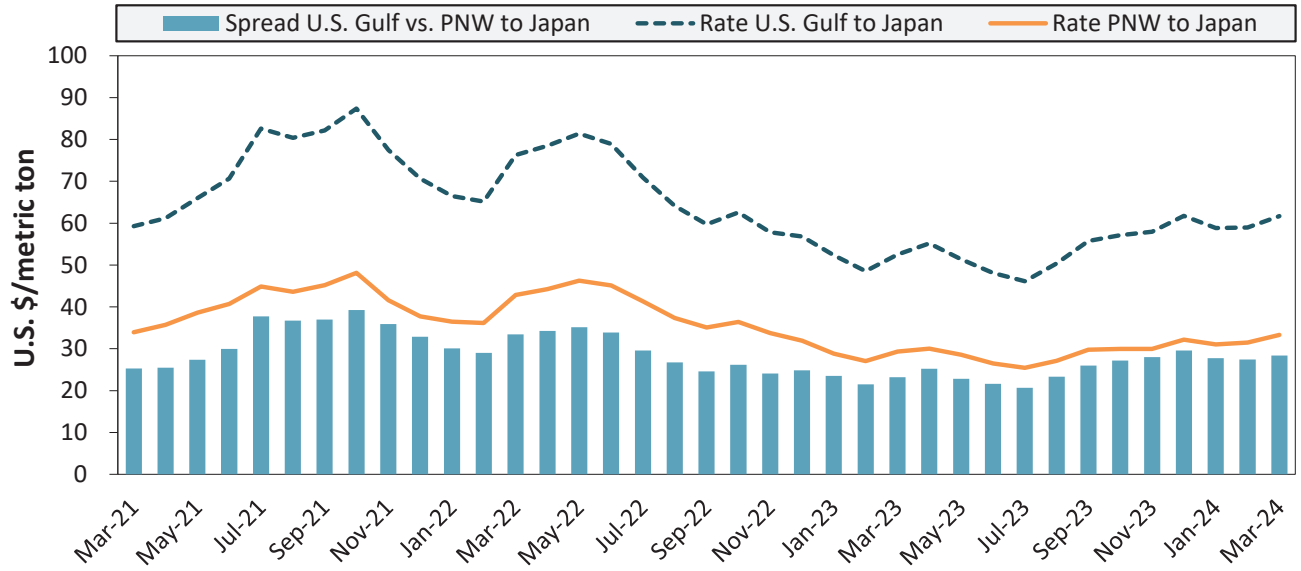
Figure 17. U.S . Gulf vessel loading activity



Week ending 4/18/24, number of vessels	Loaded	Due
Change from last year	4%	46%
Change from 4-year average	-15%	-9%

Note: U.S. Gulf includes Mississippi, Texas, and the East Gulf region.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 18. U.S. Grain vessel rates, U.S. to Japan



Ocean rates	U.S. Gulf	PNW	Spread
March 2024	$62	$33	$28
Change from March 2023	18%	14%	22%
Change from 4-year average	7%	4%	12%

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

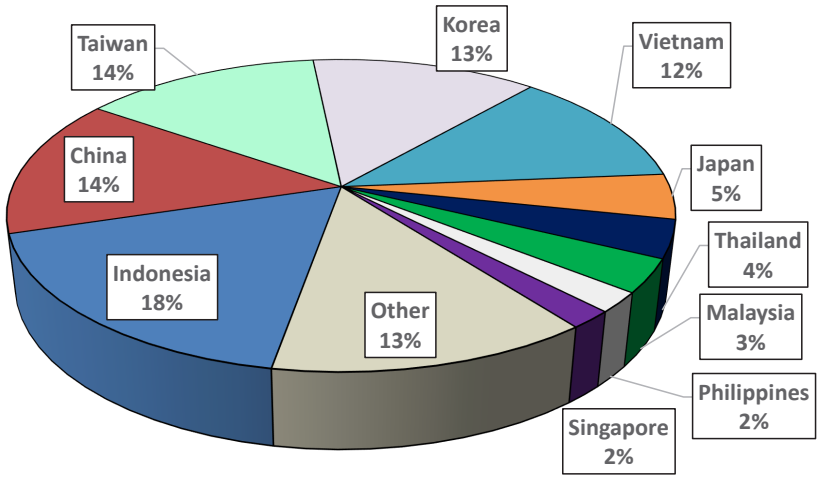
Table 18. Ocean freight rates for selected shipments, week ending 04/20/2024

Export region	Import region	Grain types	Entry date	Loading date	Volume loads (metric tons)	Freight rate (US$/metric ton)
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Heavy grain	Mar 28, 2024	Apr 20/30, 2024	50,000	71.00
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Heavy grain	Mar 9, 2024	Apr 25/May 4, 2024	54,000	67.00
U.S. Gulf	Japan	Heavy grain	Mar 20, 2024	Apr 1/5, 2024	50,000	69.50
U.S. Gulf	China	Corn	Feb 28, 2024	Mar 1/10, 2024	66,000	61.50
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy grain	Sep 12, 2023	Oct 1/ Nov 1, 2023	66,000	54.50
U.S. Gulf	Jamaica	Wheat	Nov 2, 2023	Dec 1/10, 2023	9,460	63.50
U.S. Gulf	Guyana	Wheat	Nov 2, 2023	Dec 1/10, 2023	8,250	84.00
U.S. Gulf	S. Korea	Heavy grain	Oct 10, 2023	Nov 25/Dec 5, 2023	58,000	65.35
PNW	N. China	Heavy grain	Oct 19, 2023	Nov 16/22, 2023	66,000	28.00
PNW	Thailand	Heavy grain	Oct 20, 2023	Dec 5/15, 2023	66,000	22.50
WC US	Thailand	Wheat	Nov 9, 2023	Dec 1/10, 2023	60,500	35.25
Brazil	China	Heavy grain	Apr 19, 2024	May 4/11, 2024	60,000	53.25
Brazil	N. China	Heavy grain	Apr 18, 2024	May 5/15, 2024	63,000	48.50
Brazil	China	Heavy grain	Mar 28, 2024	Apr 11/21, 2024	66,000	49.00
Brazil	China	Heavy grain	Mar 19, 2024	May 1/30, 2024	63,000	48.40
Brazil	Philippines	Soybean Meal	Feb 23, 2024	Apr 15/25, 2024	40,000	61.00
France	Morocco	Wheat	Feb 6, 2024	Feb 10/14, 2024	30,000	16.10
France	Mauritania	Wheat	Feb 6, 2024	Feb 10/14, 2024	30,000	23.50

Note: 50 percent of food aid from the United States is required to be shipped on U.S.-flag vessels. Rates shown are per metric ton (1 metric ton = 2,204.62 pounds), free on board (F.O.B), except where otherwise indicated. op = option
Source: Maritime Research, Inc.

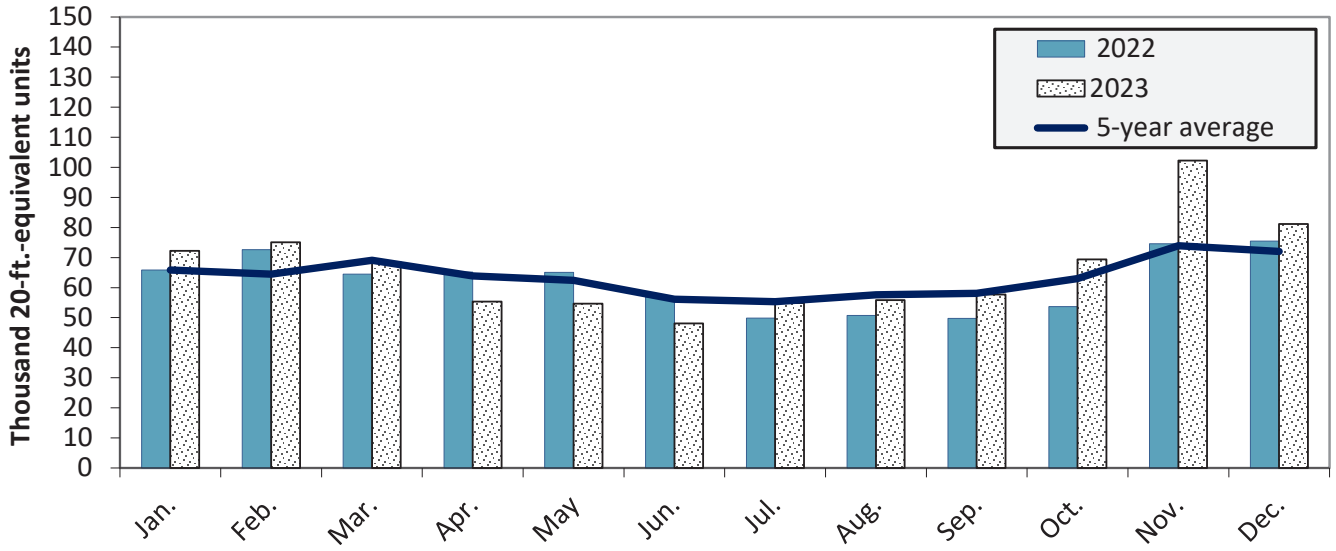
In 2020, containers were used to transport 10 percent of total U.S. waterborne grain exports. Approximately 66 percent of U.S. waterborne grain exports in 2020 went to Asia, of which 14 percent were moved in containers. Approximately 95 percent of U.S. waterborne containerized grain exports were destined for Asia.

Figure 19. Top 10 destination markets for U.S. containerized grain exports, Jan-Dec 2023



Note: The following harmonized rariff codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 1001, 100190, 1002, 100200, 1003, 100300, 1004, 100400, 1005, 100590, 1007, 100700, 110100, 1102, 110220, 110290, 1201, 120100, 120190, 120810, 230210, 230310, 230330, 2304, and 230990.
Source: Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of PIERS data, S&P Global.

Figure 20. Monthly shipments of U.S. containerized grain exports



Containerized grain shipments in Dec. 2023 were up 7.6 percent from last year and up 12.7 percent from the 5-year average.

Note: ft. = foot. The following harmonized tariff codes are used to calculate containerized grains movements: 1001, 100190, 1002, 100200, 1003, 100300, 1004, 100400, 1005, 100590, 1007, 100700, 110100, 1102, 110220, 110290, 1201, 120100, 120190, 120810, 230210, 230310, 230330, 2304, and 230990.
Source: Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service analysis of PIERS data, S&P Global.

Title	Name	Email	Phone
Coordinators	Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo	surajudeen.olowolayemo@ams.usda.gov	(202) 720-0119
	Maria Williams	maria.williams@usda.gov	(202) 690-4430
	Bernadette Winston	bernadette.winston@usda.gov	(202) 690-0487
Grain Transportation Indicators	Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo	surajudeen.olowolayemo@ams.usda.gov	(202) 720-0119
Rail Transportation	Jesse Gastelle	jesse.gastelle@ams.usda.gov	(202) 690-1144
	Peter Caffarelli	petera.caffarelli@ams.usda.gov	(202) 690-3244
	Rich Henderson	richard.henderson2@usda.gov	(919) 855-7801
	Austin Hunt	austin.hunt@usda.gov	(540) 681-2596
Barge Transportation	Rich Henderson	richard.henderson2@usda.gov	(919) 855-7801
	Alexis Heyman	alexis.heyman@usda.gov	(847) 699-2414
Truck Transportation	Kranti Mulik	kranti.mulik@usda.gov	(202) 756-2577
	April Taylor	april.taylor@ams.usda.gov	(202) 720-7880
	Alexis Heyman	alexis.heyman@usda.gov	(847) 699-2414
Grain Exports	Alexis Heyman	alexis.heyman@usda.gov	(847) 699-2414
	Kranti Mulik	kranti.mulik@usda.gov	(202) 756-2577
	Bernadette Winston	bernadette.winston@usda.gov	(202) 690-0487
Ocean Transportation	Surajudeen (Deen) Olowolayemo (Freight rates and vessels)	surajudeen.olowolayemo@ams.usda.gov	(202) 720-0119
	April Taylor (Container movements)	april.taylor@ams.usda.gov	(202) 720-7880
Editor	Maria Williams	maria.williams@usda.gov	(202) 690-4430

Subscription Information: Please sign up to receive regular email announcements of the latest GTR issue by **entering your email address** and selecting your preference to receive Transportation Research and Analysis. For any other information, you may contact us at **GTRContactUs@usda.gov**.

Preferred citation: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. *Grain Transportation Report*. April 25, 2024.
Web: **http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/TS056.04-25-2024**

Additional Transportation Research and Analysis resources include the ***Grain Truck and Ocean Rate Advisory (GTOR)***, the ***Mexico Transport Cost Indicator Report***, and the ***Brazil Soybean Transportation Report***.

Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons: M.O. Stevens and Adobe Stock