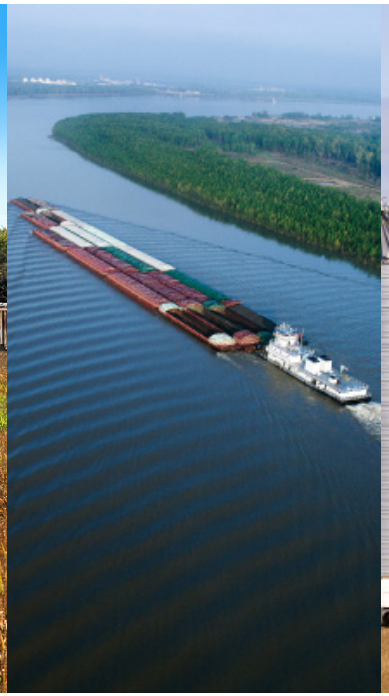
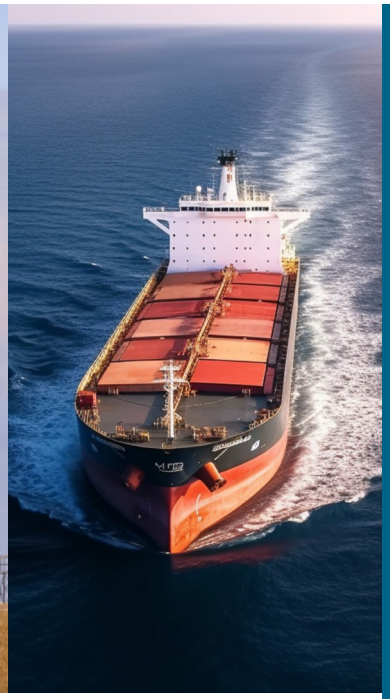
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Grain Transportation Report

Contents

May 16, 2024
A weekly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service
www.ams.usda.gov/GTR

Labor Board Review Delays Potential Canadian Rail Strike. On May 1, the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC)—a union of almost 10,000 Canadian rail workers at Canadian National Railway (CN) and CPKC—voted to authorize strikes at both companies (**fourth highlight, *Grain Transportation Report* (GTR), May 9, 2024**).

As a 21-day "cooling off" period for TCRC and the railroads draws to a close, a work stoppage could occur as soon as May 22. However, any potential strike or lockout is pending review from the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) (an independent tribunal with oversight of certain labor matters), and CIRB **indicated** it is unlikely to reach a decision by May 22.

On May 9, Canada's Labor Minister asked CIRB to clarify what, if any, rail service must continue under any circumstances. Per **Canada's Labor Code**, CIRB may order certain rail service "to prevent an immediate and serious danger to the safety or health of the public." CIRB has invited interested parties **to comment** on CPKC's movement of propane and CN's movement of fuel, propane, food, and water treatment materials. Comments are due by 5 pm on May 21.

Western Railroads Increase Grain Tariff Rates Ahead of New Marketing Year. On May 13, **Union Pacific Railroad (UP) announced** a rate increase of $280 (per car) for most corn, feed barley, sorghum, and soybean shipments. (For comparison, last year's rate increase was $175.) This year's increase will take effect on September 1 for soybeans and on October 1 for the other commodities. UP also announced that tariffs involving corn shipments to Cedar Rapids, IA, and Clinton, IA, will expire on September 30. The announcement follows other price updates. Effective June 1, UP will increase rates for **wheat (by $200 per car), flour (by $200 per car)**, and **ethanol (by $60 per car)**. Also taking effect June 1, BNSF Railway (BNSF) will raise various wheat rates by $125 to $400 per car. (BNSF had already increased ethanol rates by $150 per car starting on April 1.) On May 10, BNSF announced a temporary summer program (through August 31) for soybean shuttle trains to St. Louis.

USDA Releases New MY 2024/25 Forecasts. In the May 10 ***World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* report**, USDA updated its marketing year (MY) 2024/25 projections of U.S. supply and demand **from February**.

U.S. producers are projected to harvest 14.9 billion bushels (bbu) of corn, 4.5 bbu of soybeans, 1.9 bbu of wheat, and 0.4 bbu of grain sorghum in MY 2024/25. If realized, the combined volume (21.6 bbu) would be the fourth-highest on record—1 percent lower than the February projection, unchanged from MY 2023/24, and up 3 percent from the prior 3-year average. Record-high U.S. production of soybean meal (56.5 million tons) and soybean oil (14.3 million tons) is also expected. (For more on the rail transport of these soybean byproducts, see the **January 25, 2024** and **April 18, 2024** GTR issues, respectively.)

Fall supplies of corn, soybeans, and sorghum are projected at 23.9 bbu, up 3 percent from 2023 and up 6 percent from the 3-year average. Rising grain supplies (relative to only small increases in storage in recent years) may create more pressure than usual on the U.S. transportation system during the upcoming harvest (at least nationally).

FMCSA Outlines Key Bridge Truck Parking Plan. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) **outlined short- and long-term plans** to address the impaired truck parking problem following the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, MD. In the short term, FMCSA is assessing the impacts of the bridge collapse on truck parking and collecting possible alternative parking options for inclusion in a map, to be available soon.

The agency has explored multiple options, including public lots at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and/or Community College of Baltimore County. Also, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is working to secure parking near the Port of Baltimore.

FMCSA long-term plans include building a dashboard to show parking demand; working to identify areas of high demand; helping States layer maps of public or private property available for parking; and exploring emergency-lease options or other corridor-based emergency parking solutions.

For additional transportation news related to grain and other agricultural products, see the **Transportation Updates and Regulatory News** *page on AgTransport. A* **dataset of all news entries since January 2023** *is also available on AgTransport.*

Export Sales

For the week ending May 2, **unshipped balances** of wheat, corn, and soybeans for marketing year (MY) 2023/24 totaled 18.60 million metric tons (mmt), down 3 percent from last week and up 7 percent from the same time last year.

Net **corn export sales** for MY 2023/24 were 0.89 mmt, up 17 percent from last week. Net **soybean export sales** were 0.43 mmt, up 4 percent from last week. Net weekly **wheat export sales** were 0.041, up significantly from last week.

Rail

U.S. Class I railroads originated 24,908 **grain carloads** during the week ending May 4. This was a 7-percent increase from the previous week, 4 percent more than last year, and 8 percent fewer than the 3-year average.

Average May **shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers** (per car) were $50 above tariff for the week ending May 9. This was $84 more than last week and $377 more than this week last year. Average non-shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers per car were $400 above tariff. This was $275 more than last week, and $400 more than this week last year.

Barge

For the week ending May 11, **barged grain movements** totaled 489,772 tons. This was 16 percent more than the previous week and 67 percent more than the same period last year.

For the week ending May 11, 326 grain barges **moved down river**—57 more than last week. There were 594 grain barges **unloaded** in the New Orleans region, 28 percent more than last week.

Ocean

For the week ending May 9, 27 **oceangoing grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf—42 percent more than the same period last year. Within the next 10 days (starting May 10), 29 vessels were expected to be loaded—28 percent fewer than the same period last year.

As of May 9, the rate for shipping a metric ton (mt) of grain from the U.S. Gulf to Japan was $63.50, 2 percent more than the previous week. The rate from the Pacific Northwest to Japan was $34.00 per mt, 2 percent more than the previous week.

Fuel

For the week ending May 13, the U.S. average **diesel price** decreased 4.6 cents from the previous week to $3.848 per gallon, 4.9 cents below the same week last year.

Canadian National Railway Buys Iowa Northern Railway

On December 6, 2023, Canadian National Railway (CN) announced it had finalized an agreement to acquire the Iowa Northern Railway (IANR) (*Grain Transportation Report (GTR), December 7, 2023, first highlight*). IANR is a Class III short line railroad in Northeast Iowa—one of the most important U.S. corn-growing and corn-processing regions.

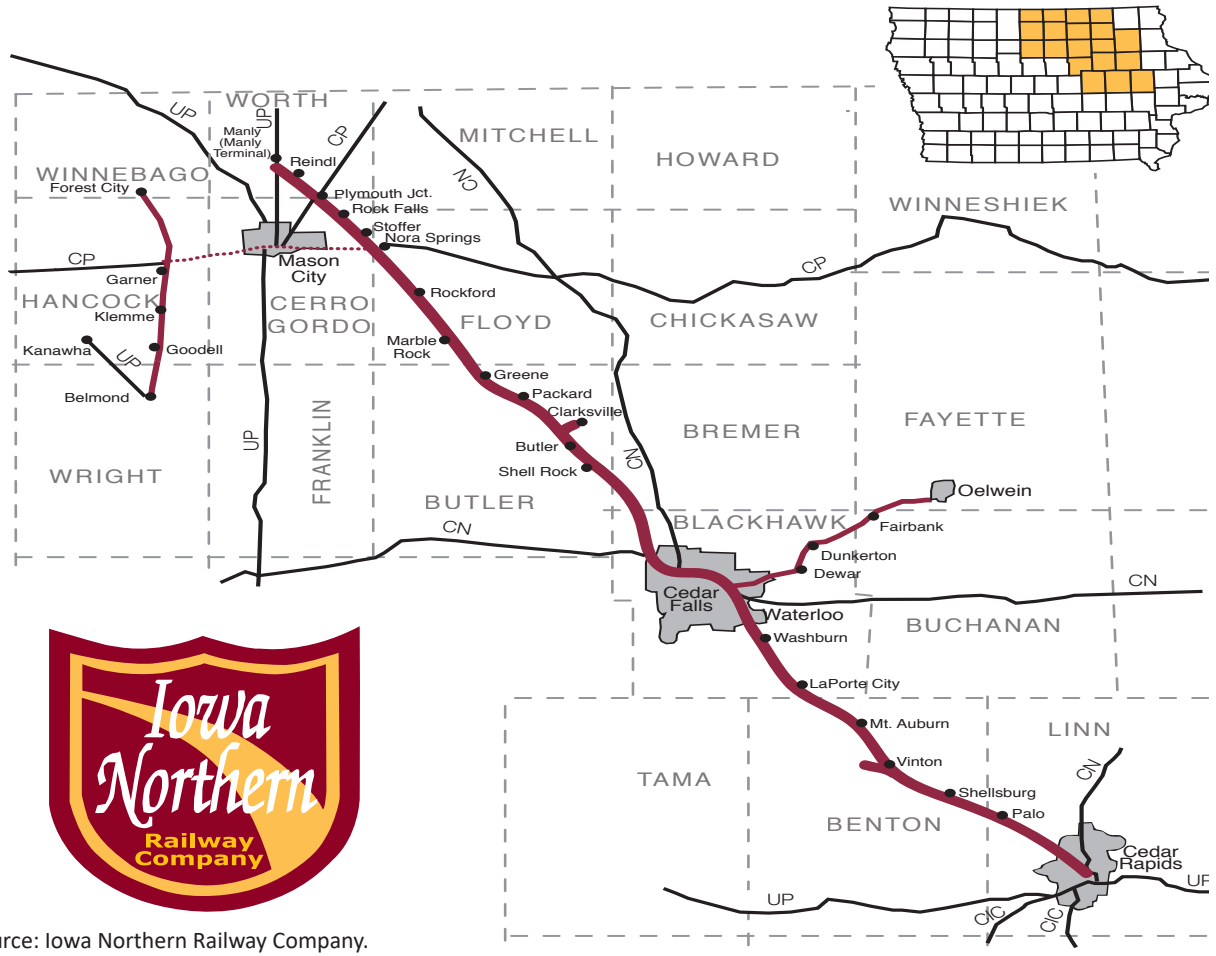
This article begins with background on the operations of IANR and CN in Iowa. Next, the article summarizes the merger proceeding before the Surface Transportation Board (STB)—including STB's criteria for approval, salient points of the initial application, and comments from railroads, the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA), and USDA.

Background: IANR and CN

IANR. Founded in 1984, IANR is a Class III railroad that operates over 253 miles in Northeast Iowa. IANR's main line runs from Manly—which features a biofuels transload facility—to Cedar Rapids, a major corn-processing center. IANR also operates two branch lines—one from Waterloo to Oelwein and the other from Forest City to Belmond (fig. 1). Both branch lines were candidates for abandonment before IANR acquired them.

Though smaller than service regions of Class I railroads, IANR's 19-county region is central to grain production and processing. According to the *2022 Census of Agriculture*, farmers in the IANR region harvested 624 million bushels of corn. This was 25 percent of Iowa's total corn production and 5 percent of the Nation's total corn harvest that year. Put another way, the IANR Region's corn harvest was larger than that of all of South Dakota—the Nation's sixth-largest corn-producing State in 2022. The IANR region also has considerable soybean and pork production.

Figure 1. Map of Iowa Northern Railway



Source: Iowa Northern Railway Company.

IANR serves about 20 grain elevators, two ethanol plants, and a soybean-crushing facility. With a stellar reputation among both small and large shippers, the short line is also known for excellent customer service and affordable freight rates for both local moves and connections with three Class I railroads, CPKC, CN, and Union Pacific Railroad (UP).

CN. CN is the smallest of six Class I railroads for U.S.-originated grain carloads (GTR table 3). About 70 percent of CN's network is in Canada. Its network within the United States runs south from Milwaukee, WI, to New Orleans, LA, and west from Chicago, IL, through Iowa to Sioux City, IA, and Omaha, NE. CN also operates two branch lines in Iowa that run parallel to IANR's main line: Osage Subdivision (Cedar Falls to the Minnesota State line) and Cedar Rapids Subdivision (Manchester to Cedar Rapids).

According to STB data, CN originated 4,337 grain carloads in Iowa in 2023—down 63 percent from the prior 4-year average. From 2019 to 2023, CN originated 11 percent of all grain carloads among Class I railroads in Iowa. BNSF Railway and UP together originated 85 percent of Iowa's grain carloads (fig. 2). CN serves at least six shuttle train elevators in Iowa—mostly, western Iowa.

STB Proceeding on IANR Acquisition

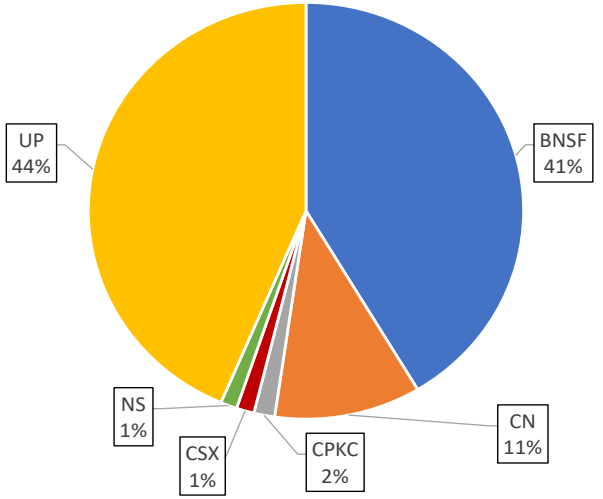
STB is required by law to approve all merger applications, unless a transaction involves two Class I railroads—or (more relevant to the IANR acquisition) unless STB finds the transaction will likely result in a "substantial lessening of competition" and "if the anticompetitive effects of the transaction outweigh the public interest."[1] Herein lie STB's main criteria in deliberating the IANR acquisition. Nevertheless, the agency has "extraordinarily broad discretion in deciding whether to impose protective conditions."[2]

Application. On January 30, 2024, CN and IANR submitted an application to STB seeking approval for the merger transaction. On February 29, STB accepted the application for consideration and set the procedural schedule (with comments from interested parties due April 29 after a short extension). Comments were submitted by labor unions, NGFA, USDA, a short line railroad, and Class I railroads.

The application emphasized the purported benefits of the transaction—mainly, that CN would provide IANR shippers with additional single-line service on the CN network, while also maintaining existing interline options on "commercially reasonable" terms (referred to as an "open gateway commitment"). Additionally, CN noted that the transaction would not result in any anticompetitive effects, emphasizing that no shippers will go from two railroad options to one as a result of the transaction.

Another potential benefit of the transaction relates to the biofuels sector—a growth area for grain transportation (GTR, April 18, 2024). According to one CN executive, "CN is the only railroad that directly serves the refining hubs in Western and Eastern Canada, the U.S. Gulf Coast, and the U.S. Midwest." As a result, CN is involved in all transportation required to produce and market biofuels—from transporting whole oilseeds to oilseed crush plants, to moving vegetable oil and other feedstocks to refineries, to moving renewable fuels to end markets.

Figure 2. Class I railroad shares of loaded grain carloads in Iowa, 2019-23



Note: BNSF = BNSF Railway; CN = Canadian National; CSX = CSX Transportation; NS = Norfolk Southern Railway; and UP = Union Pacific Railroad.
Source: Surface Transportation Board.

As addenda to the CN/IANR application to STB, several agribusinesses provided statements in support of CN's acquisition of IANR—including Shell Rock Soy Processing, Zinpro Corporation (an animal feed manufacturer), Scoular, Viterra, and two grain elevators located on IANR's Forest City to Belmond branch line.

Railroad Response. The CN/IANR application received comments from three railroads. Two of the railroads are Class I

1 49 U.S.C. §11324(d).
2 *Grainbelt Corp. v. Surface Transp. Bd.*, 109 F.3d 794 (D.C. Cir. 1997).

railroads that maintain interchanges with IANR—CPKC and UP. The third railroad—Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway (CRANDIC)—is a short line railroad that interchanges with IANR in Cedar Rapids. A fourth railroad, the Iowa Interstate Railroad, **reached a settlement** with CN before comments were submitted on April 29.

UP's comments concerned CN's plans to arrange reciprocal switching with other carriers—plans UP described as "ambiguous." UP requested that STB condition the merger transaction on a commitment by CN/IANR to maintain IANR's existing reciprocal switching practices. **CRANDIC**, which interchanges with both CN and IANR in Cedar Rapids, believes it has a "solid working relationship" with IANR. However, CRANDIC describes CN as having a "big railroad" approach, noting there have been "occasions where CN personnel have attempted to strong arm CRANDIC."

In the application, CN described modifications to the way CN/IANR would interchange with CRANDIC in Cedar Rapids. In its comments, however, CRANDIC noted that it has not agreed to this arrangement (because of the excessive costs it would impose on CRANDIC). CRANDIC requested that STB make clear that a decision to approve the transaction would not alter existing interchange agreements between CRANDIC, CN, and IANR.

The most extensive of any submission, **CPKC's comments** emphasized the CN/IANR transaction would likely result in substantial anti-competitive outcomes. CPKC notes that CN and IANR have overlapping service territories and handle the same basic mix of commodities, so without the merger, these factors put them in direct, "horizontal" competition with each other. CPKC contends that CN's open gateway commitment does not address the loss of beneficial horizontal competition.

Besides the CN/IANR application's open gateway commitment, CPKC requests that STB impose a targeted haulage agreement on the transaction, which would allow CPKC (and other carriers) to quote rates for traffic on current IANR lines (for shippers with current access to both CN and IANR). According to CPKC, this remedy would "preserve the competitive options available to customers today that would be lost if the Proposed Transaction were approved."

NGFA Response. NGFA was the only agriculture group to comment in the proceeding. In **NGFA**'s comments, the group indicated that CN's open gateway commitment is ill-defined. To clarify it, NGFA requested that STB impose the same terms (including a 5-year oversight period) that the agency had secured to approve the Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern Railway merger. Those terms involved a binding arbitration process, service reporting requirement, and a written justification for rate increases above the rate of inflation for interline movements. NGFA also asked STB to condition its approval on CN's development of a local service plan and maintenance of IANR's stellar customer service.

USDA Response. Emphasizing Northeast Iowa's key role in the Nation's agricultural economy, **USDA's comments** characterized IANR as a "post-Staggers success" story, because the firm has consistently grown rail traffic, prevented rail abandonments, and built a loyal customer base among shippers small and large, over its 40-year history. USDA did not take a stance on whether STB should approve the transaction, but did suggest conditions to preserve IANR's strengths of high-quality, low-cost, and efficient service.

USDA requested that, if the transaction is approved, STB impose a price-transparency condition requiring CN to publish all IANR tariffs and provide shippers with written justification for any increase above the rate of inflation. USDA also asked that STB collect service metrics for lines currently served by IANR and encouraged STB to provide IANR shippers with arbitration opportunities to resolve rate and service disputes during a 5-year oversight period.

Looking Forward

CN and IANR will have a chance to respond to comments on May 29. This is also when all other responses to comments, protests, requests for conditions, and other oppositions are due to STB. STB plans to issue a final decision on this transaction by July 26.

Austin.Hunt@usda.gov
Jesse.Gastelle@usda.gov
PeterA.Caffarelli@usda.gov

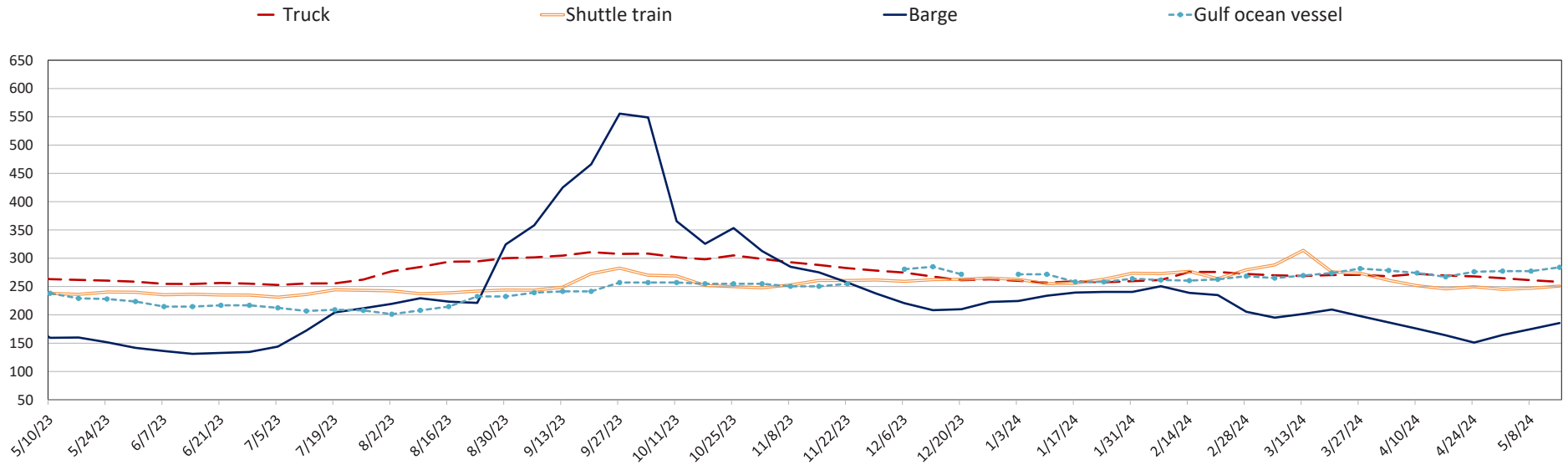
Grains are transported to the domestic and international markets via one or a combination of the following modes: truck, rail, barge and ocean-going vessel. Monitoring the cost of transportation for each mode is vital to the marketing decision making process.

Table 1. Grain transport cost indicators

For the week ending:	Truck	Rail		Barge	Ocean	
		Non-shuttle	Shuttle		Gulf	Pacific
05/15/24	258	339	251	186	284	241
05/08/24	261	323	247	175	277	236
05/17/23	262	317	236	160	229	202

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.

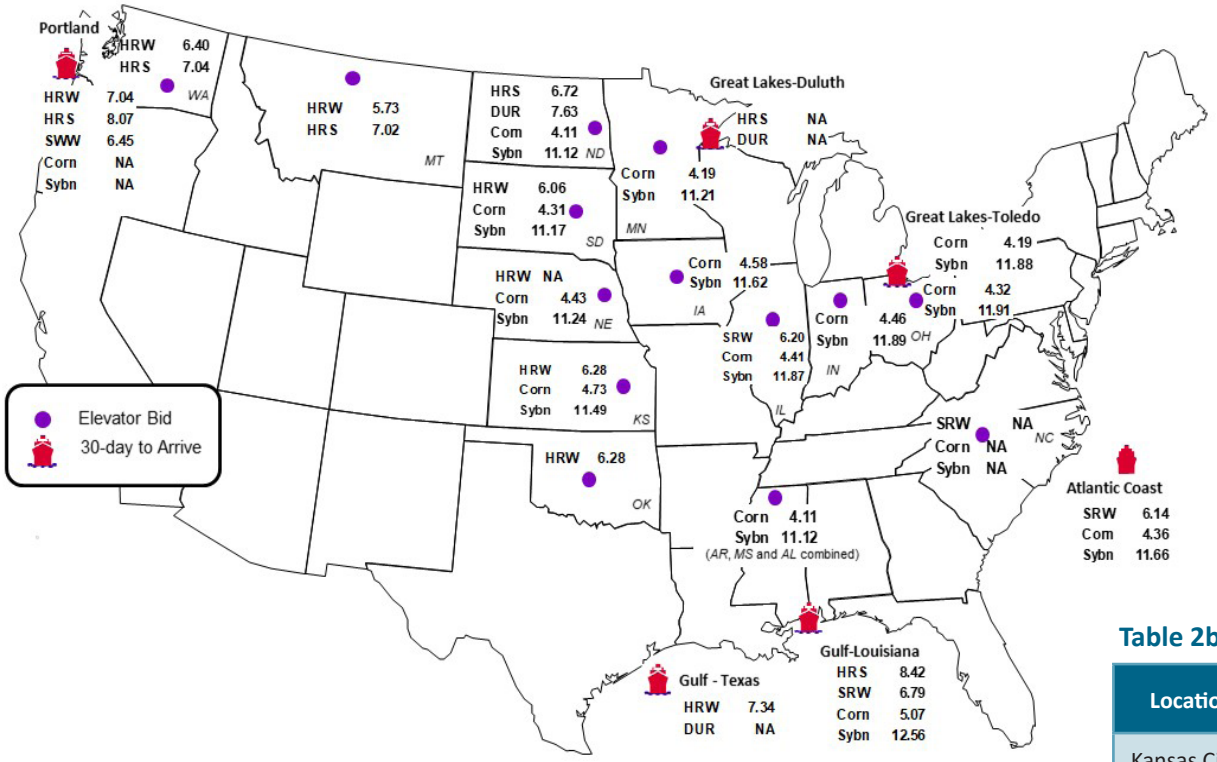
Figure 1. Grain transportation cost indicators as of week ending 05/15/24



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	5/10/2024	5/3/2024
Corn	IL–Gulf	-0.66	-0.67
Corn	NE–Gulf	-0.64	-0.65
Soybean	IA–Gulf	-0.94	-0.92
HRW	KS–Gulf	-1.06	-1.39
HRS	ND–Portland	-1.35	-1.40

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	5/10/2024	Week ago 5/3/2024	Year ago 5/12/2023
Kansas City	Wheat	July	6.914	6.520	9.040
Minneapolis	Wheat	July	7.200	7.144	8.664
Chicago	Wheat	July	6.810	6.232	6.500
Chicago	Corn	July	4.730	4.600	5.900
Chicago	Soybean	July	12.224	12.162	14.006

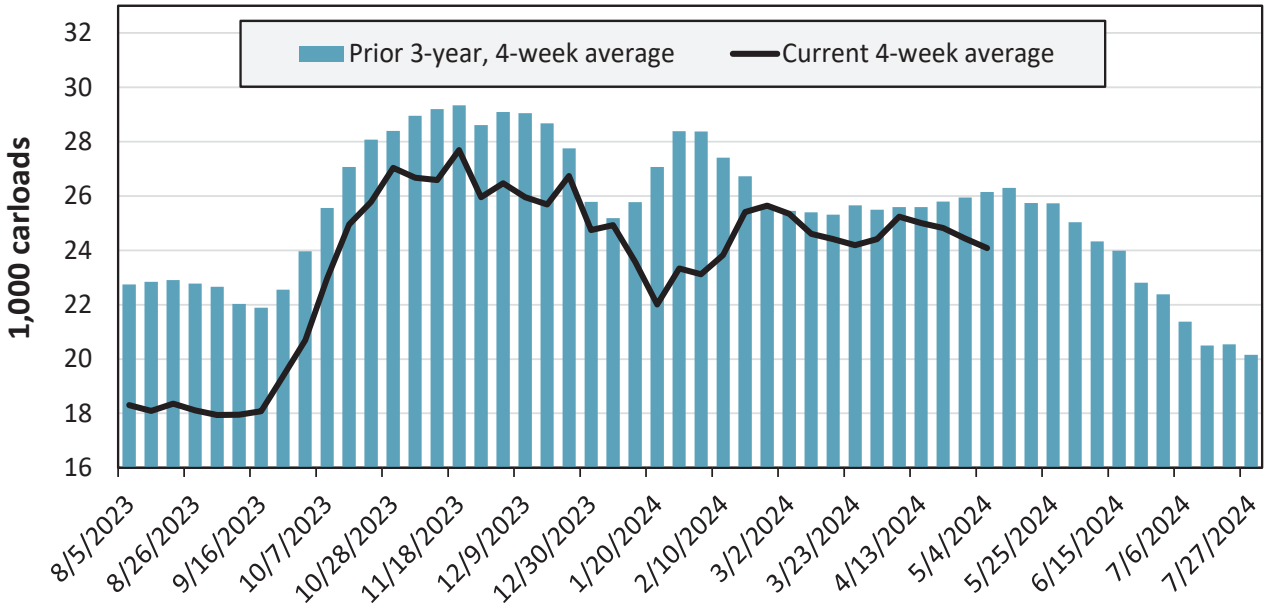
Sources: U.S. Inland: GeoGrain, USDA Weekly Bids, U.S. Export: Corn & Soybean - Export Grain Bids, AMS, USDA Wheat Bids - Weekly Wheat Report, U.S. Wheat Associates, Washington, DC.

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

For the week ending: 5/04/2024	East		West		Central U.S.		U.S. total
	CSXT	NS	BNSF	UP	CPKC	CN	
This week	1,998	2,810	11,080	5,837	2,475	708	24,908
This week last year	1,944	2,631	9,244	6,792	2,517	791	23,919
2024 YTD	30,469	48,138	195,414	95,736	52,403	17,983	440,143
2023 YTD	36,484	47,929	176,924	104,585	44,271	27,489	437,682
2024 YTD as % of 2023 YTD	84	100	110	92	118	65	101
Last 4 weeks as % of 2023	91	96	117	84	92	60	98
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr. avg.	96	101	99	84	93	51	92
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 May 4, grain carloads were down 1 percent from the previous week, down 2 percent from last year, and down 8 percent from the 3-year average.

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

For the week ending: 5/4/2024		East		West		Central U.S.			U.S. Average
		CSX	NS	BNSF	UP	CN	CP	KCS	
Grain unit train origin dwell times (hours)	This week	24.8	33.3	16.7	17.9	5.0	16.3	14.6	18.4
	Average over last 4 weeks	30.5	31.4	15.6	16.4	4.8	12.3	22.7	19.1
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	39.0	54.2	15.5	16.8	12.9	29.8	11.3	25.6
Grain unit train speeds (miles per hour)	This week	22.9	19.1	24.7	23.4	26.1	21.7	26.0	23.4
	Average over last 4 weeks	23.2	19.4	25.1	23.2	25.6	22.2	26.7	23.6
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	23.5	14.8	25.4	22.9	24.2	22.3	25.5	22.7

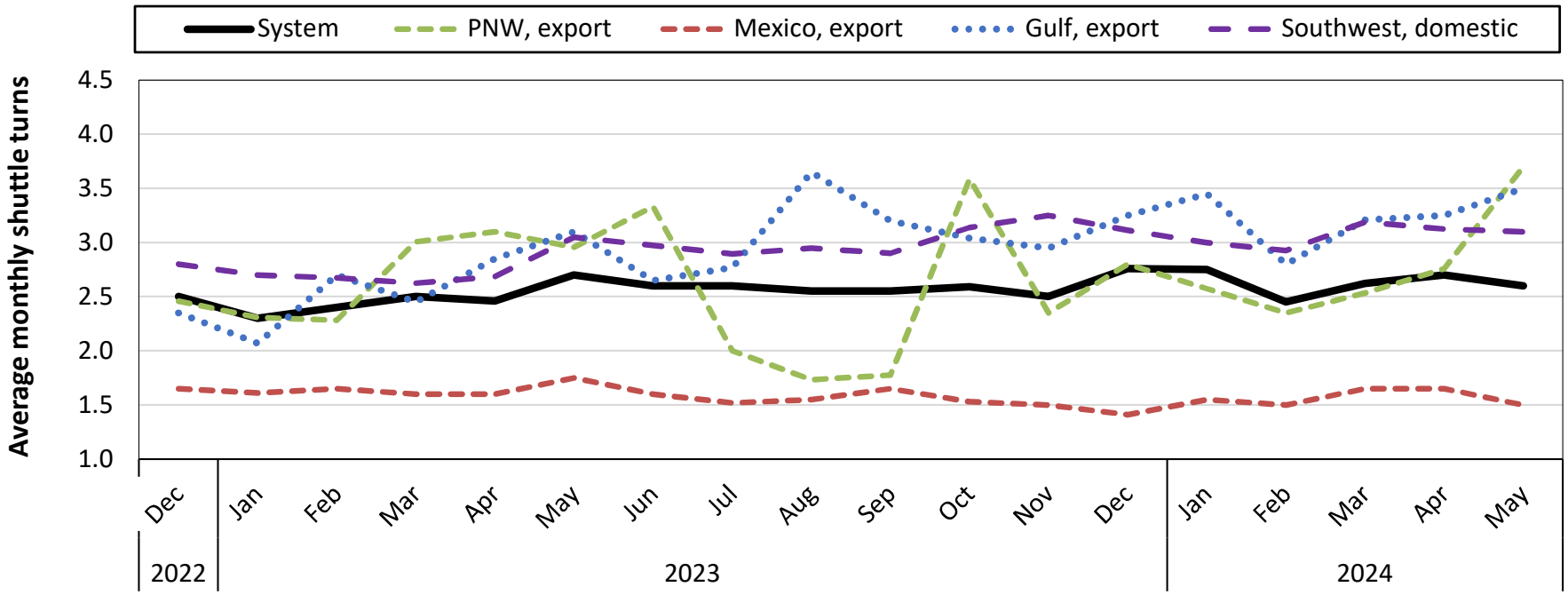
Note: NS = Norfolk Southern; UP = Union Pacific; CN = Canadian National; CP = Canadian Pacific; KCS = Kansas City Southern. Although CP and KCS have merged to form CPKC, the service metrics are reported for two legacy networks that correspond to the old nomenclature (CP and KCS).
These service metrics 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: 5/4/2024		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	21	6	467	108	9	24	11	646
	Average over last 4 weeks	13	5	472	98	4	40	25	656
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	13	23	708	94	10	69	45	961
Loaded grain cars not moved in over 48 hours (number)	This week	29	217	669	67	1	26	23	1,032
	Average over last 4 weeks	15	217	619	78	2	27	21	979
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	12	478	625	133	10	115	14	1,385
Grain unit trains held (number)	This week	0	2	19	6	0	3	5	36
	Average over last 4 weeks	0	3	16	5	0	3	6	33
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	1	5	8	10	0	2	4	29
Unfilled grain car orders (number)	This week	0	13	804	520	0	28	0	1,365
	Average over last 4 weeks	1	7	2,491	375	0	56	0	2,930
	Average of same 4 weeks last year	1	12	1,646	1,034	0	204	40	2,937

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

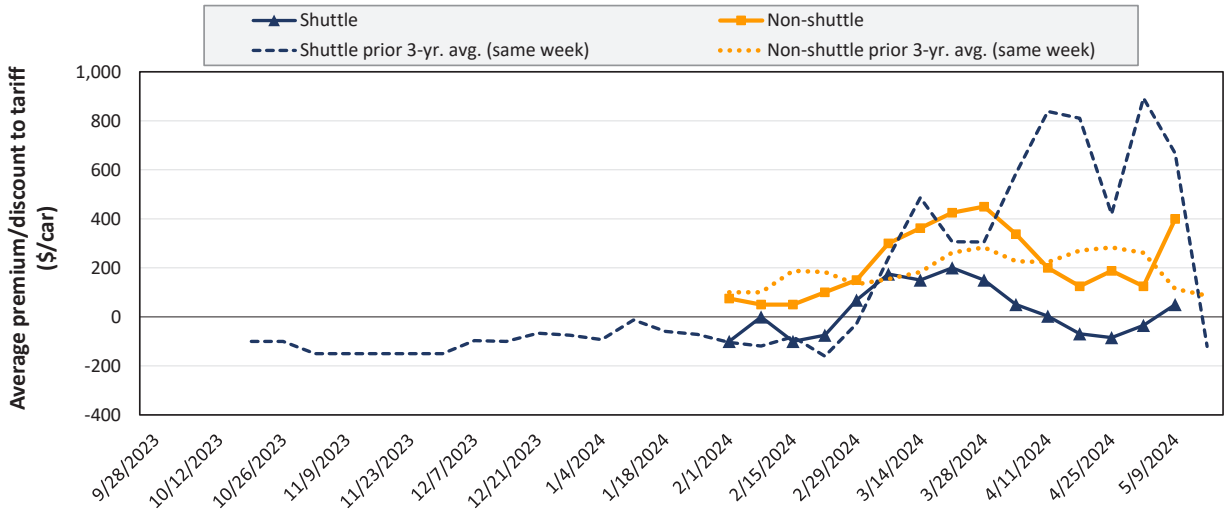


Average monthly system-wide grain shuttle turns reported in the first week of May 2024 were 2.6. By destination region, average monthly grain shuttle turns were 3.7 to PNW, 1.5 to Mexico, 3.5 to the Gulf, and 3.1 to the Southwest.

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 May 2024



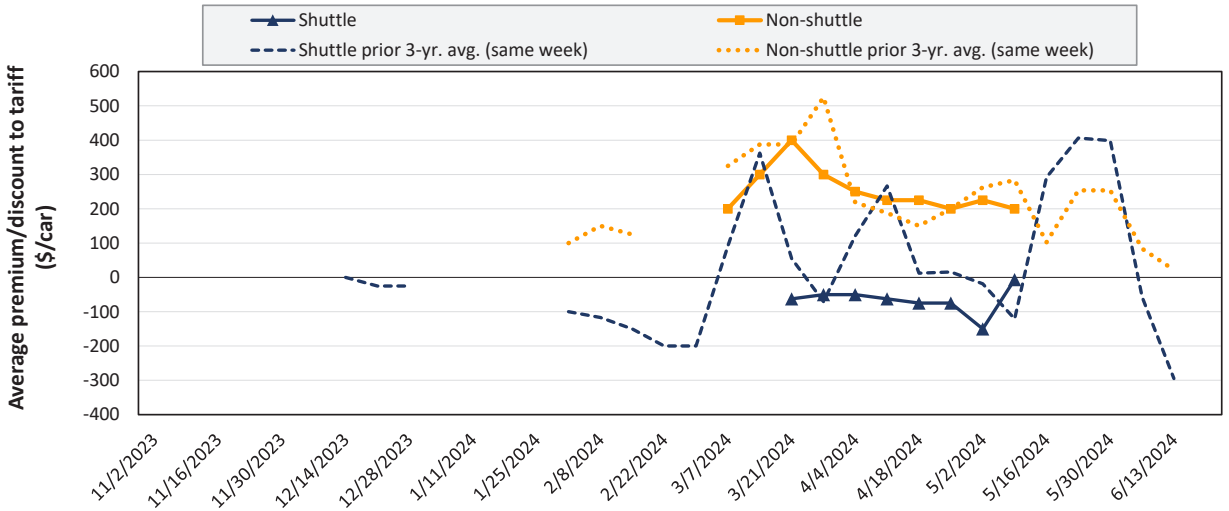
Average non-shuttle bids/offers rose $275 this week, and are $50 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers rose $84 this week and are $150 below the peak.

5/9/2024	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$400	n/a
Shuttle	$225	-$125

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 June 2024



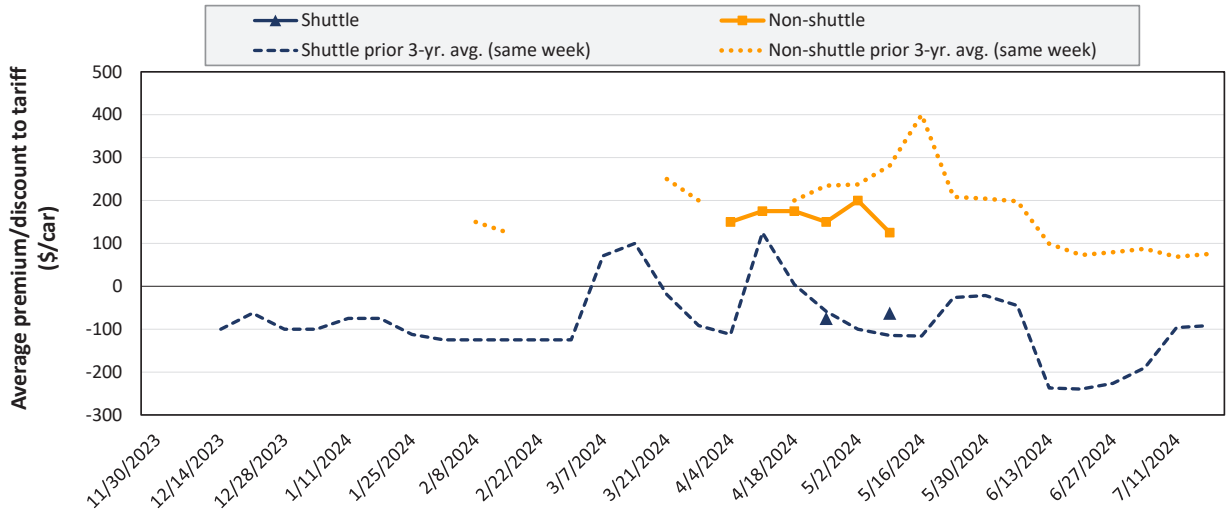
Average non-shuttle bids/offers fell $25 this week, and are $200 below the peak.

Average shuttle bids/offers rose $144 this week and are at the peak.

5/9/2024	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$300	$100
Shuttle	$125	-$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 July 2024



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

There were no shuttle bids/offers last week. Average shuttle bids/offers this week are at the peak.

5/9/2024	BNSF	UP
Non-Shuttle	$200	$50
Shuttle	-$25	-$100

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: 5/9/2024		Delivery period					
		May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24
Non-shuttle	BNSF	400	300	200	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	50	50	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	400	250	150	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP	n/a	100	50	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	n/a	-100	-150	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	n/a	150	25	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle	BNSF	225	125	-25	-163	-163	n/a
	Change from last week	181	175	n/a	26	-38	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	428	n/a	200	n/a	50	n/a
	UP	-125	-138	-100	-100	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	-12	113	n/a	-100	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	325	163	100	100	n/a	n/a
	CPKC	-150	-50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	-50	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2023	-50	50	n/a	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

May 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	5
	Grand Forks, ND	Duluth-Superior, MN	$3,508	$60	$35.43	$0.96	-9
	Wichita, KS	Los Angeles, CA	$6,840	$306	$70.96	$1.93	-9
	Wichita, KS	New Orleans, LA	$4,825	$347	$51.36	$1.40	4
	Sioux Falls, SD	Galveston-Houston, TX	$6,611	$251	$68.14	$1.85	-9
	Colby, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	$5,075	$380	$54.17	$1.47	4
	Amarillo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	$5,121	$529	$56.11	$1.53	-1
Corn	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$4,000	$392	$43.62	$1.11	-1
	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	1
Soybeans	Minneapolis, MN	New Orleans, LA	$3,156	$572	$37.02	$1.01	-24
	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	3

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

May 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	-5
	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	$7,413	$0	$73.61	$2.00	5
	Grand Forks, ND	Portland, OR	$5,701	$304	$59.63	$1.62	-7
	Grand Forks, ND	Galveston-Houston, TX	$5,146	$312	$54.20	$1.48	-6
	Colby, KS	Portland, OR	$5,923	$624	$65.01	$1.77	-1
Corn	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$5,660	$370	$59.88	$1.52	-2
	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	$5,620	$339	$59.18	$1.50	-1
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	$4,345	$392	$47.04	$1.20	3
	Lincoln, NE	Galveston-Houston, TX	$4,560	$198	$47.25	$1.20	3
	Des Moines, IA	Amarillo, TX	$4,845	$307	$51.16	$1.30	3
	Minneapolis, MN	Tacoma, WA	$5,660	$367	$59.85	$1.52	-2
	Council Bluffs, IA	Stockton, CA	$5,780	$380	$61.17	$1.55	2
Soybeans	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	$6,335	$339	$66.28	$1.80	-1
	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$6,385	$370	$67.08	$1.83	-2
	Fargo, ND	Tacoma, WA	$6,235	$301	$64.91	$1.77	-1
	Council Bluffs, IA	New Orleans, LA	$5,270	$452	$56.83	$1.55	2
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	$5,509	$0	$54.71	$1.49	4
	Grand Island, NE	Portland, OR	$5,905	$638	$64.98	$1.77	2

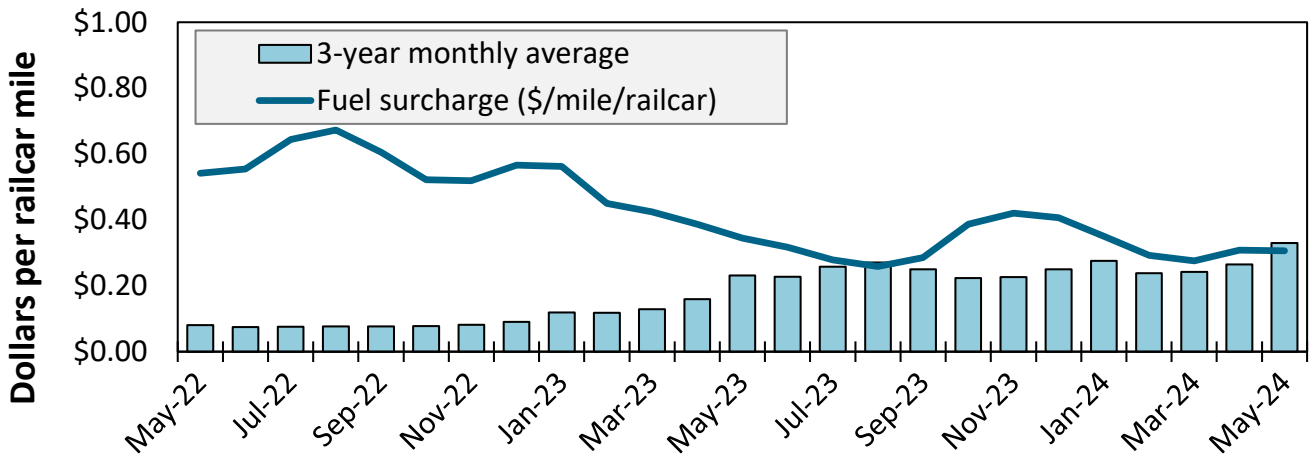
Note: A unit train refers to shipments of at least 25 cars. Shuttle train rates are generally available for qualified shipments of 75-120 cars that meet railroad efficiency requirements. The table assumes 111 short tons (100.7 metric tons) per car, 56 pounds per bushel of corn, and 60 pounds per bushel 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 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.

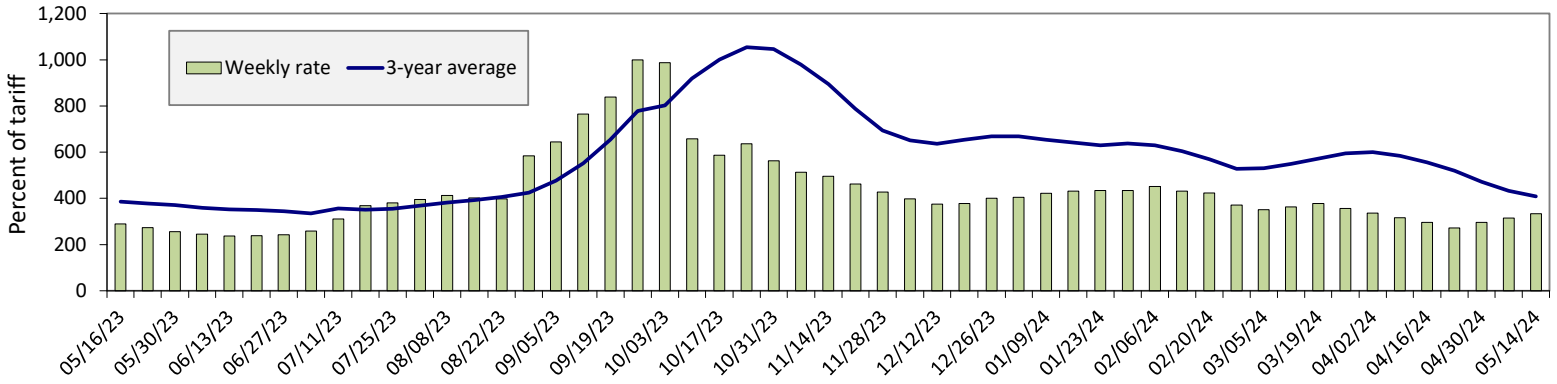
Figure 8. Railroad fuel surcharges, North American weighted average



May 2024: $0.31/mile, unchanged from last month's surcharge of $0.31/mile; down 4 cents from the May 2023 surcharge of $0.35/mile; and down 2 cents from the May prior 3-year average of $0.33/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 May 14: 6 percent higher than the previous week; 16 percent higher than last year; and 18 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	5/14/2024	360	344	334	247	263	263	209
	5/7/2024	347	325	315	229	256	256	203
$/ton	5/14/2024	22.28	18.30	15.50	9.86	12.33	10.63	6.56
	5/7/2024	21.48	17.29	14.62	9.14	12.01	10.34	6.37
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	-19	0	16	9	1	1	-7
	3-year avg.	-30	-23	-18	-19	-26	-26	-26
Rate	June	353	335	324	239	256	256	209
	August	396	364	363	327	328	328	301

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.

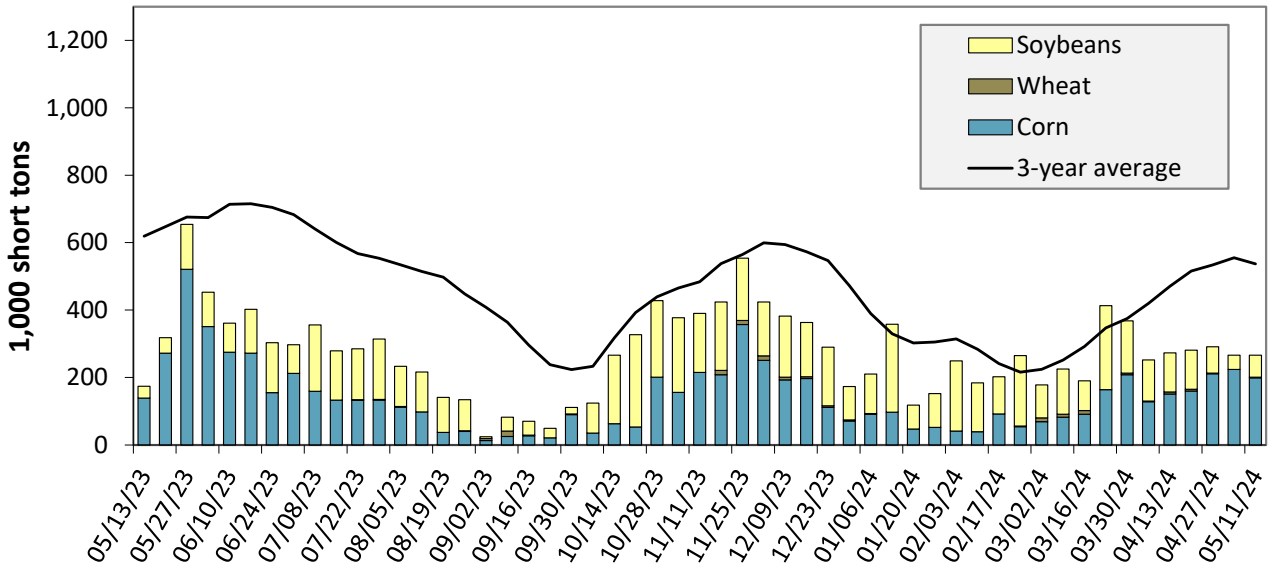
Figure 10. Benchmark tariff rates

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 May 11: 53 percent higher than last year and 51 percent lower than the 3-year average.

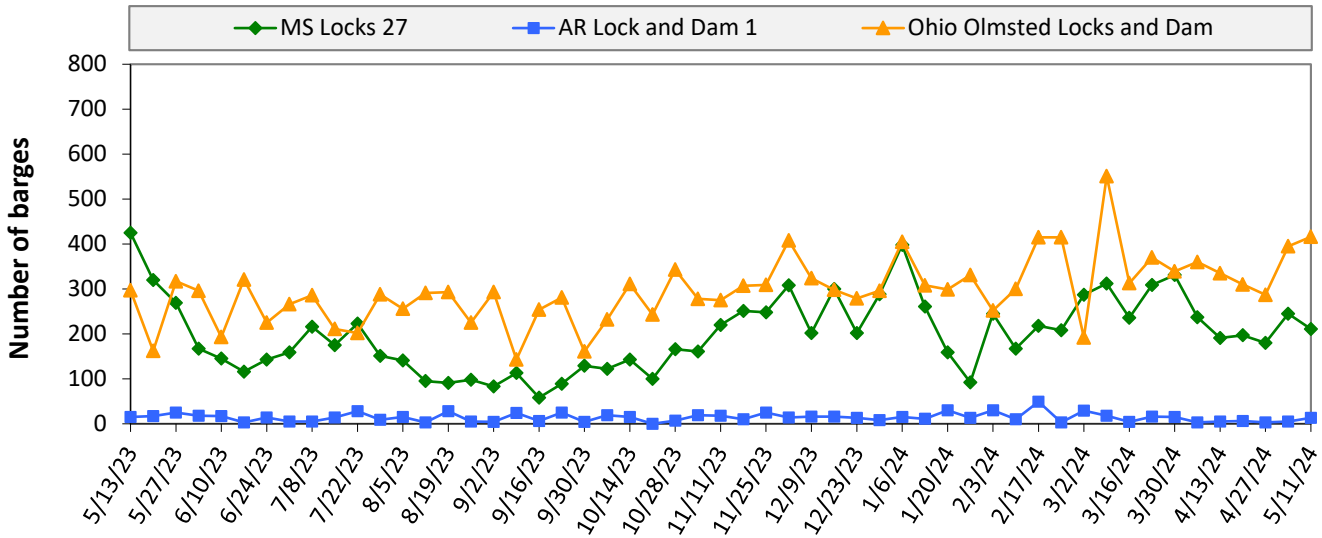
Note: The 3-year average is a 4-week moving average. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently migrated its lock and vessel database and has noted the latest data may be revised in coming weeks.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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

For the week ending 05/11/2024	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River (Rock Island, IL (L15))	50	2	27	0	78
Mississippi River (Winfield, MO (L25))	80	2	41	0	122
Mississippi River (Alton, IL (L26))	227	2	66	0	295
Mississippi River (Granite City, IL (L27))	199	2	65	0	265
Illinois River (La Grange)	143	0	41	0	184
Ohio River (Olmsted)	185	15	25	0	224
Arkansas River (L1)	0	0	0	0	0
Weekly total - 2024	384	16	90	0	490
Weekly total - 2023	227	20	46	0	293
2024 YTD	4,799	629	4,346	78	9,852
2023 YTD	5,122	505	4,884	152	10,663
2024 as % of 2023 YTD	94	125	89	52	92
Last 4 weeks as % of 2023	99	84	73	58	90
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.

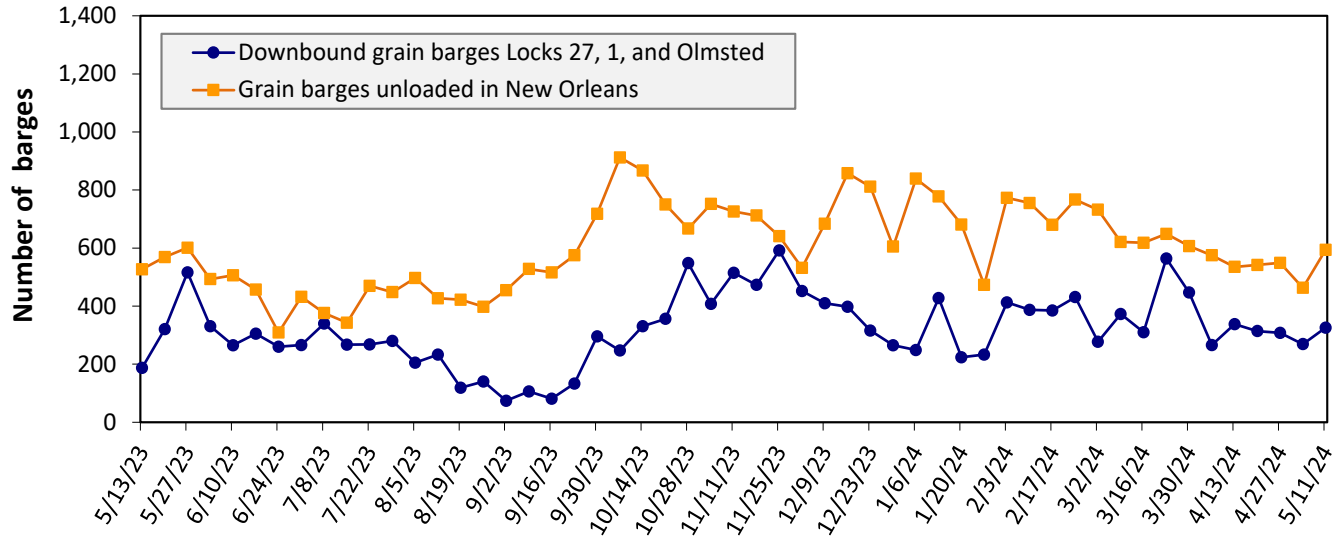
Figure 12. Upbound empty barges transiting Mississippi River Locks 27, Arkansas River Lock and Dam 1, and Ohio River Olmsted Locks and Dam



For the week ending May 11: 640 barges transited the locks, 5 barges fewer than the previous week, and 15 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 May 11: 326 barges moved down river, 57 more than the previous week; 594 grain barges unloaded in the New Orleans Region, 28 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.

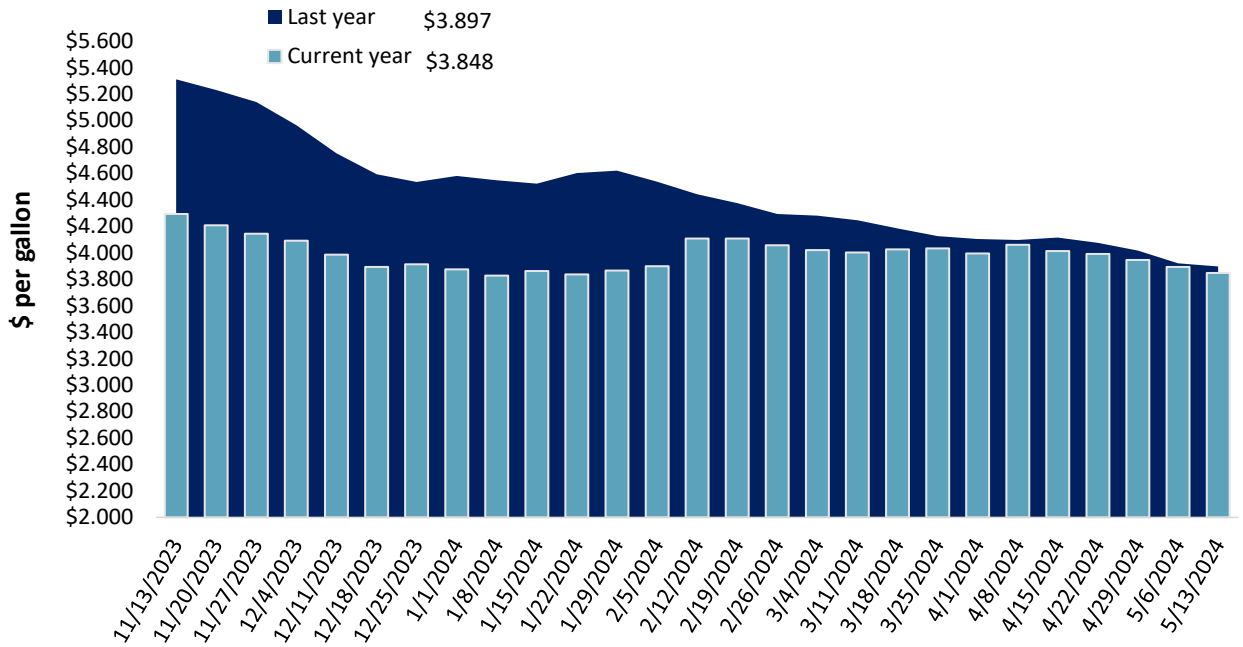
The weekly diesel price provides a proxy for trends in U.S. truck rates as diesel fuel is a significant expense for truck grain movements.

Table 11. Retail on-highway diesel prices, week ending 5/13/2024 (U.S. $/gallon)

Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	3.916	-0.050	-0.016
	New England	4.233	-0.044	-0.010
	Central Atlantic	4.155	-0.053	-0.083
	Lower Atlantic	3.794	-0.052	0.007
II	Midwest	3.768	-0.046	-0.055
III	Gulf Coast	3.559	-0.058	-0.034
IV	Rocky Mountain	3.791	0.006	-0.298
V	West Coast	4.551	-0.029	-0.037
	West Coast less California	4.053	-0.026	-0.329
	California	5.123	-0.032	0.298
Total	United States	3.848	-0.046	-0.049

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 May 13, the U.S. average diesel fuel price decreased 4.6 cents from the previous week to $3.848 per gallon, 4.9 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 5/2/2024	440	382	525	392	27	1,766	13,180	3,658	18,603
	This week year ago	483	368	729	549	113	2,241	11,877	3,285	17,403
	Last 4 wks. as % of same period 2022/23	117	152	101	89	22	106	117	108	114
Current shipped (cumulative) exports sales	2023/24 YTD	3,159	3,912	5,904	3,597	500	17,072	34,444	38,679	90,195
	2022/23 YTD	4,637	2,560	5,023	4,127	340	16,687	26,517	47,423	90,627
	YTD 2023/24 as % of 2022/23	68	153	118	87	147	102	130	82	100
	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 5/2/2024	Total commitments (1,000 mt)			% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2020-22 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2024/25	YTD MY 2023/24	YTD MY 2022/23		
Mexico	1,543	19,522	13,966	40	15,445
China	0	2,196	8,036	-73	14,427
Japan	488	8,539	5,620	52	9,283
Colombia	0	4,920	1,972	149	3,592
Korea	0	2,165	782	177	1,938
Top 5 importers	**2,030**	**37,341**	**30,376**	**23**	**44,685**
Total U.S. corn export sales	2,177	47,624	38,394	24	55,397
% of YTD current month's export projection	4%	87%	91%	-	-
Change from prior week	49	889	257	-	-
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	**93%**	**78%**	**79%**	**-**	**81%**
USDA forecast May 2024	**55,980**	**54,707**	**42,265**	**29**	**-**
Corn use for ethanol USDA forecast, May 2024	**138,430**	**138,430**	**131,471**	**5**	**-**

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 5/2/2024	Total commitments (1,000 mt)			% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2020-22 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2024/25	YTD MY 2023/24	YTD MY 2022/23		
China	0	23,840	31,173	-24	32,321
Mexico	0	4,498	4,340	4	4,912
Egypt	0	934	1,106	-16	2,670
Japan	68	1,890	2,062	-8	2,259
Indonesia	2	1,695	1,368	24	1,973
Top 5 importers	**70**	**32,857**	**40,048**	**-18**	**44,133**
Total U.S. soybean export sales	**865**	**42,336**	**50,708**	**-17**	**56,656**
% of YTD current month's export projection	2%	91%	93%	-	-
Change from prior week	5	429	4	-	-
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	**8%**	**78%**	**79%**	**-**	**78%**
USDA forecast, May 2024	**49,728**	**46,322**	**54,278**	**-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 5/02/2024	Total commitments (1,000 mt)			% change current MY from last MY	Exports 3-year average 2019-21 (1,000 mt)
	YTD MY 2024/25	YTD MY 2023/24	YTD MY 2022/23		
Mexico	461	2,995	3,237	-7	3,566
Philippines	377	2,854	2,235	28	2,985
Japan	249	1,958	2,248	-13	2,453
China	0	2,113	1,099	92	1,537
Nigeria	25	276	767	-64	1,528
Korea	390	1,375	1,335	3	1,459
Taiwan	107	1,104	848	30	1,106
Indonesia	0	491	345	42	711
Thailand	162	460	636	-28	703
Colombia	73	327	527	-38	621
Top 10 importers	**1843**	**13,952**	**13,277**	**5**	**16,669**
Total U.S. wheat export sales	**2,960**	**18,838**	**18,929**	**-0**	**22,763**
% of YTD current month's export projection	14%	96%	92%	-	-
Change from prior week	406	41	26	-	-
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	**62%**	**74%**	**70%**	**-**	**73%**
USDA forecast, May 2024	**21,117**	**19,595**	**20,681**	**-5**	**-**

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.

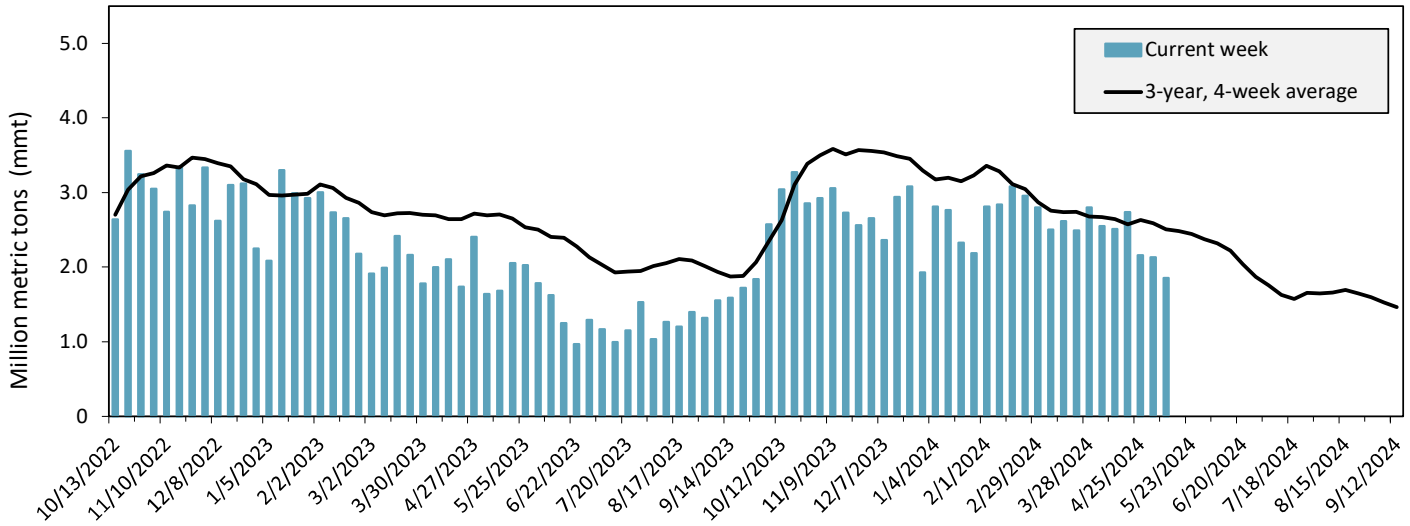
Table 16. Grain inspections for export by U.S. port region (1,000 metric tons)

Port regions	Commodity	For the week ending 05/09/2024	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	354	379	93	6,961	2,401	290	146	106	5,267
	Soybeans	0	44	0	2,502	3,334	75	33	30	10,286
	Wheat	144	130	111	3,818	3,662	104	181	96	9,814
	All Grain	**567**	**620**	**91**	**14,107**	**9,593**	**147**	**155**	**97**	**25,913**
Mississippi Gulf	Corn	421	619	68	9,293	9,795	95	89	65	23,630
	Soybeans	303	188	161	10,202	11,624	88	98	98	26,878
	Wheat	178	118	151	2,269	1,013	224	236	190	3,335
	All Grain	**902**	**926**	**97**	**21,818**	**22,432**	**97**	**100**	**79**	**53,843**
Texas Gulf	Corn	9	9	100	197	90	219	185	121	397
	Soybeans	0	0	n/a	0	49	0	n/a	n/a	267
	Wheat	0	2	27	566	982	58	27	28	1,593
	All Grain	**80**	**81**	**100**	**2,402**	**1,992**	**121**	**82**	**65**	**5,971**
Interior	Corn	154	285	54	4,861	3,513	138	143	139	10,474
	Soybeans	102	123	83	2,839	2,421	117	149	111	6,508
	Wheat	44	78	56	1,002	896	112	102	105	2,281
	All Grain	**303**	**487**	**62**	**8,812**	**6,877**	**128**	**138**	**126**	**19,467**
Great Lakes	Corn	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	57
	Soybeans	0	0	n/a	8	29	28	n/a	27	192
	Wheat	0	11	0	111	95	117	290	126	581
	All Grain	**0**	**11**	**0**	**119**	**124**	**96**	**326**	**72**	**831**
Atlantic	Corn	0	7	0	157	56	279	235	211	166
	Soybeans	1	2	52	423	1,082	39	17	8	2,058
	Wheat	0	0	n/a	10	41	25	n/a	n/a	101
	All Grain	**1**	**9**	**14**	**589**	**1,179**	**50**	**56**	**28**	**2,325**
All Regions	Corn	938	1,299	72	21,469	15,864	135	114	86	40,004
	Soybeans	406	358	113	16,027	18,644	86	101	88	46,459
	Wheat	366	339	108	7,776	6,690	116	138	101	17,738
	All Grain	**1,853**	**2,133**	**87**	**47,902**	**42,312**	**113**	**119**	**89**	**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.

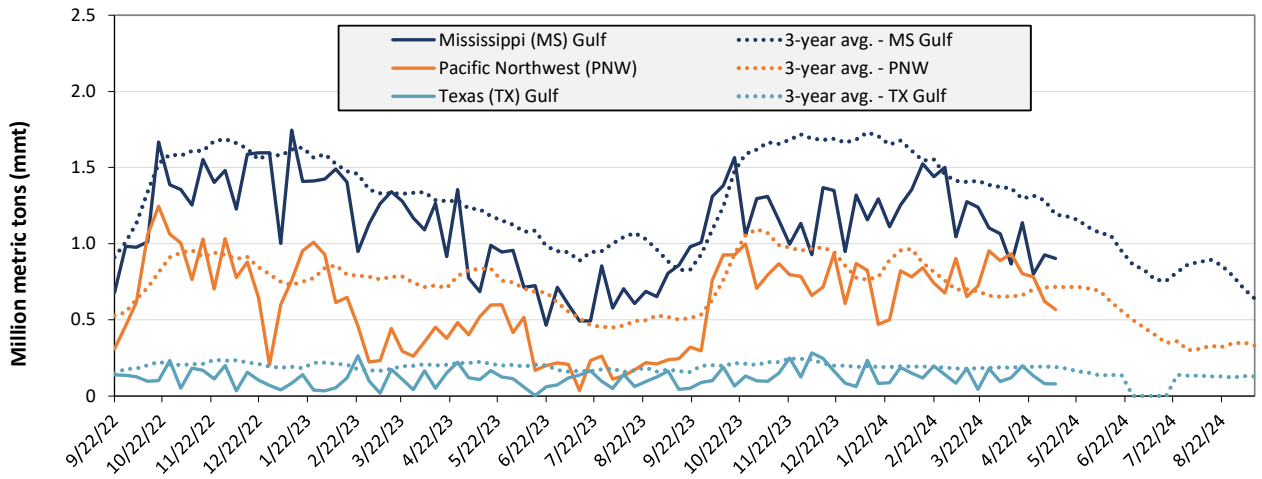
Figure 15. U.S. grain inspected for export (wheat, corn, and soybeans)



For the week ending May. 9: 1.9 mmt of grain inspected, down 13 percent from the previous week, up 19 percent from the same week last year, and down 26 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 05/09/24 inspections (mmt):
MS Gulf: 0.9
PNW: 0.57
TX Gulf: 0.08

Percent change from:	MS Gulf	TX Gulf	U.S. Gulf	PNW
Last week	down 3	un-changed	down 2	down 9
Last year (same 7 days)	up 53	down 41	up 35	up 20
3-year average (4-week moving average)	down 24	down 58	down 29	down 21

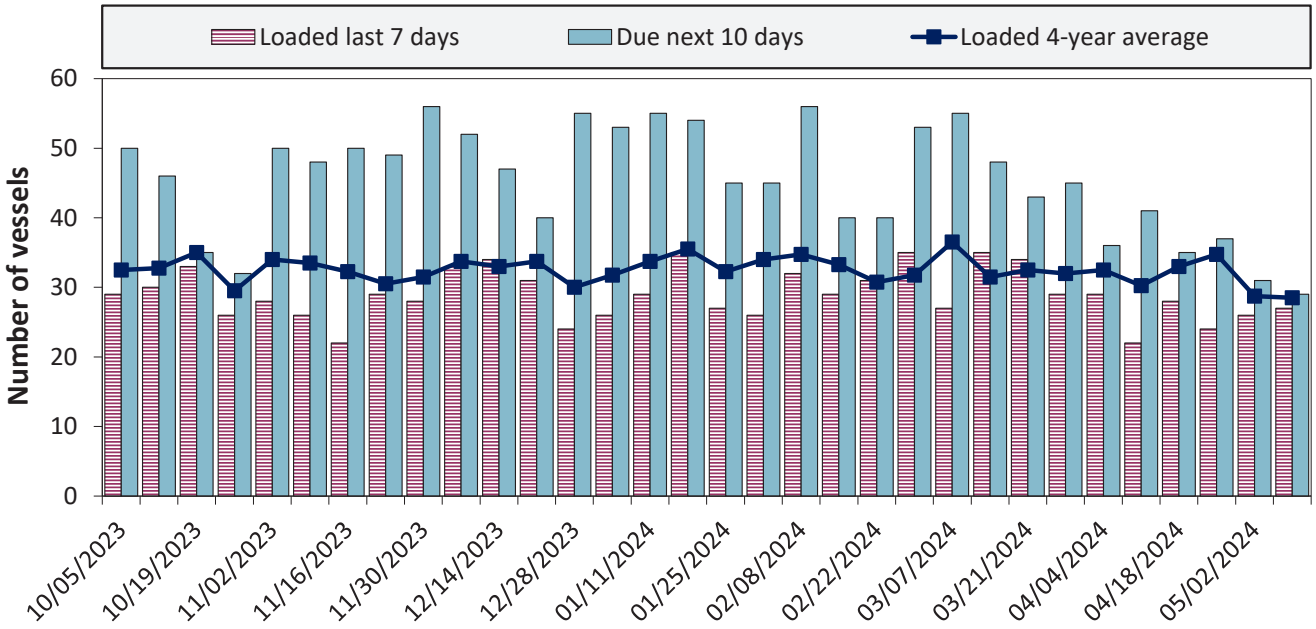
Source: USDA, Federal Grain Inspection Service.

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
5/9/2024	14	27	29	7
5/2/2024	19	26	31	7
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.

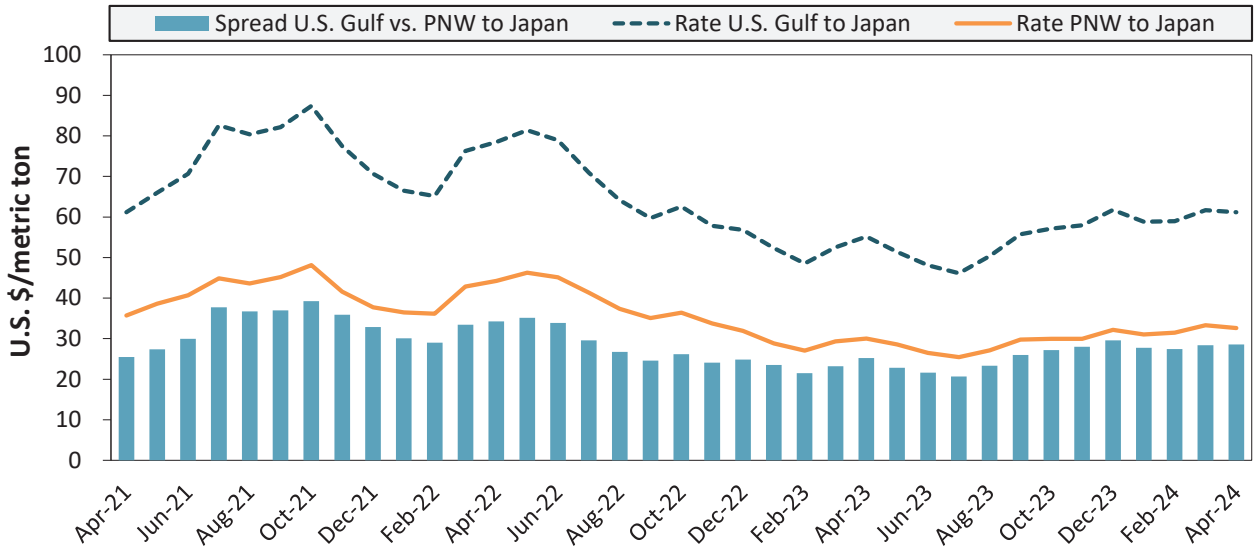
Figure 17. U.S . Gulf vessel loading activity



Week ending 5/9/24, number of vessels	Loaded	Due
Change from last year	42%	-28%
Change from 4-year average	-5%	-40%

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
April 2024	$61	$33	$29
Change from April 2023	11%	9%	13%
Change from 4-year average	5%	1%	11%

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

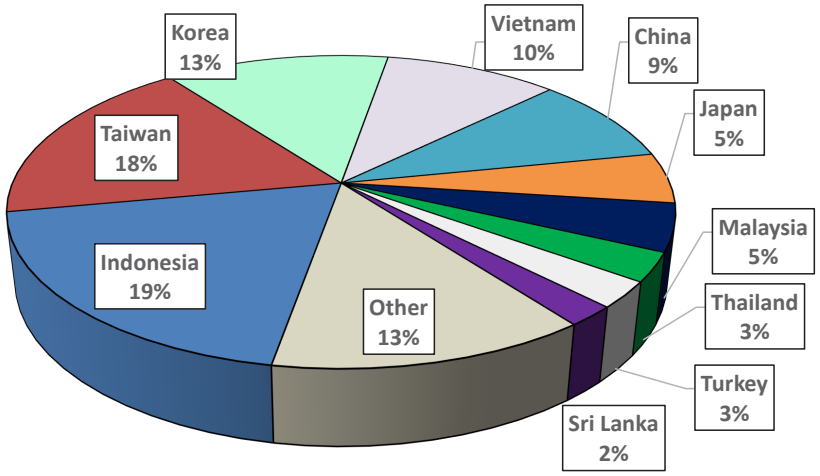
Table 18. Ocean freight rates for selected shipments, week ending 05/11/2024

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	Colombia	Wheat	May 7, 2024	May 20/30, 2024	3,000	28.30
U.S. Gulf	S. Korea	Heavy grain	Oct 10, 2023	Nov 25/Dec 5, 2023	58,000	65.35
Brazil	N. China	Heavy grain	May 9, 2024	May 15/18, 2024	63,000	51.50
Brazil	China	Corn	May 10, 2024	Jun 15/Jul 15, 2024	65,000	49.00
Brazil	N. China	Heavy grain	May 3, 2024	May 20/30, 2024	65,000	46.00
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.

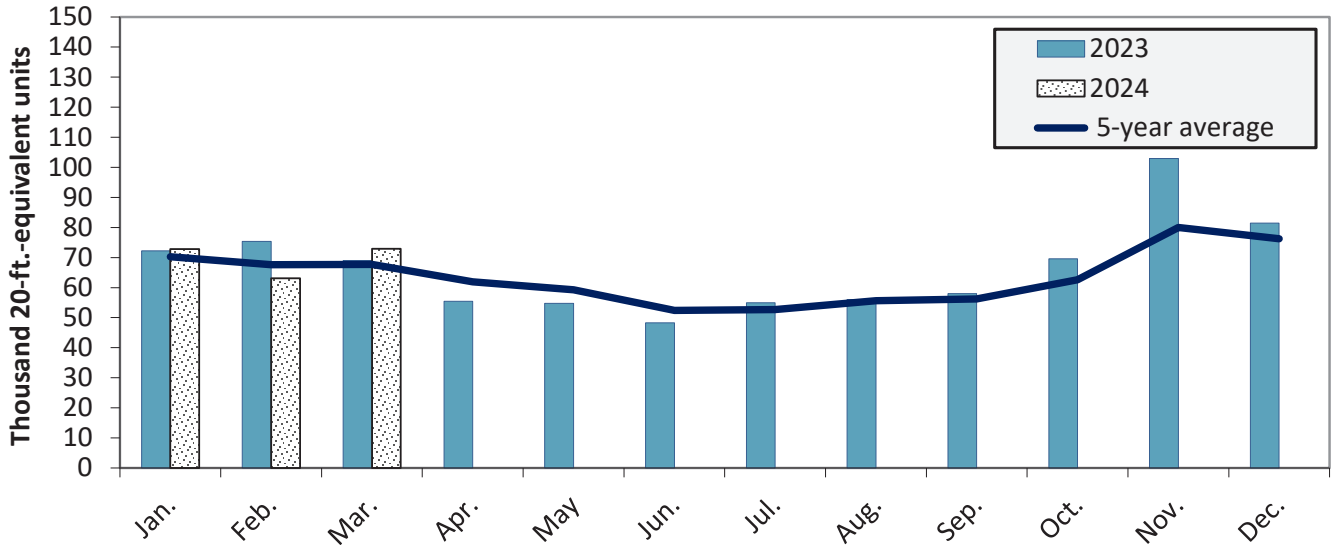
In 2020, containers were used to transport 10 percent of total U.S. waterborne grain exports. Approximately 66 percent of U.S. waterborne grain exports in 2020 went to Asia, of which 14 percent were moved in containers. Approximately 95 percent of U.S. waterborne containerized grain exports were destined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

Figure 19. Top 10 destination markets for U.S. containerized grain exports, Jan-Mar 2024



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 Mar. 2024 were up 5.7 percent from last year and up 7.7 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*. May 16, 2024.
Web: **http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/TS056.05-16-2024**

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: Adobe Stock