Grain Transportation Report

A weekly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service
www.ams.usda.gov/GTR

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January 25, 2018

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

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Warmer Temperatures and Rain Easing Inland Navigation Issues

Downbound grain shipments at Ohio River Locks and Dam 52, for the week ending January 20 (week 3), were 378 thousand tons; 138 percent higher than the previous week. Water levels on the lower Ohio river have reached sufficient levels as to allow barges to transit the site through the navigable pass of the dam, rather than the time-consuming process of using the lock. During week 3, ice buildup at Locks 27 on the Mississippi River restricted tow sizes and reduced downbound grain tonnages at that site to 57 thousand tons. This is a 47 percent decrease from the previous week. Barge traffic in St. Louis (below Locks 27) has been hampered by low water conditions and ice, but warmer temperatures and rain have increased river levels and overall conditions are improving. In addition, the tow restrictions at Locks 27 were lifted on January 20. The Illinois River is experiencing ice issues but, due to improved weather conditions, grain tonnages were 120 thousand tons for week 3, which is 77 percent higher than the previous week.

Grain Inspections Up for Second Consecutive Week

For the week ending January 18, **total inspections of grain** (corn, wheat, and soybeans) for export from all major U.S. export regions reached 2.51 million metric tons. This is a 10 percent increase from the previous week, but down 3 percent from the same time last year, and 5 percent above the 3-year average. Inspections remained strong for corn and soybeans, with each increasing 14 percent from the past week. Wheat inspections, however, were down 9 percent from the previous week, and total inspections of all grain during the last four weeks were 17 percent below last year's numbers. In the Pacific Northwest, grain inspections jumped 51 percent from the past week as demand from Asia remained strong. Mississippi Gulf inspections decreased 8 percent for the same period. Outstanding (unshipped) export sales were up from the previous week for corn and soybeans, but down for wheat.

Port of Savannah Moves Record Number of Containers

According to a January 22 press release from the Georgia Ports Authority, the Port of Savannah handled more than 4 million twenty-foot equivalent container units (TEUs) in 2017; a record annual total and 11 percent more than last year. The Port is undertaking several initiatives, such as adding ten super-post-Panamax cranes, expanding rail and gate capacity, and deepening the harbor. Four new cranes arrived in November, with the first to go into service in February followed by two more in March. The Port's \$128 million "Mason Mega Rail Terminal" project is slated to double on-dock rail capacity and expand its market reach into the Midwest. Completion of the project is expected by the end of 2020. Work to deepen the Port is scheduled for completion by the end of 2021. Upon completion, the outer harbor depth will be 49 feet at low tide and 56 feet at high tide. The inner harbor will be at 47 feet at low tide and 54 feet at high tide. This will allow the port to accommodate larger vessels. In 2015, the Port of Savannah moved over 316 thousand TEUs of agricultural cargo, about 14 percent of which was containerized animal feed and soybeans (see USDA-AMS's 2017 *Profiles of Top U.S. Agricultural Ports*, [Savannah, GA Export/Import Profile](#)).

Snapshots by Sector

Export Sales

For the week ending January 11, **unshipped balances** of wheat, corn, and soybeans totaled 33.9 mmt; down 13 percent from the same time last year. Net weekly **wheat export sales** were .153 mmt; up 116 percent from the previous week. Net **corn export sales** were 1.89 mmt; up significantly from the previous week. Net **soybean export sales** were 1.24 mmt for the same period; up 104 percent from the previous week.

Rail

U.S. Class I railroads originated 21,957 **grain carloads** for the week ending January 13; up 12 percent from the previous week, down 10 percent from last year, and down 6 percent from the 3-year average.

Average February shuttle **secondary railcar** bids/offers per car were \$125 above tariff for the week ending January 18; down \$8 from last week, and \$708 lower than last year. There were no non-shuttle bids/offers this week.

Barge

For the week ending January 20, **barge grain movements** totaled 497,468 tons; 75 percent higher than the previous week and down 32 percent from the same period last year.

For the week ending January 20, 295 grain barges **moved down river**, up 68 percent from last week. There were 564 grain barges **unloaded in New Orleans**, 24 percent fewer than the previous week.

Ocean

For the week ending January 18, 32 **ocean-going grain vessels** were loaded in the Gulf; 26 percent less than the same period last year. Sixty-six vessels are expected to be loaded within the next 10 days; 11 percent less than the same period last year.

For the week ending January 18, the ocean freight rate for shipping bulk grain from the Gulf to Japan was \$44.50 per metric ton. The cost of shipping from the PNW to Japan was \$24.50 per metric ton.

Fuel

During the week ending January 22, average **diesel fuel prices** were unchanged from the previous week at \$3.03 per gallon; 46 cents above the same week last year.

Feature Article/Calendar

Feb. 6	Iowa Soybean Association Research Conference	Des Moines, IA	http://www.iasoybeans.com/calendar/
Feb. 6-8	IAOM Latin America Region Conf/Expo	Panama Marriott, Panama City, Panama	913-338-3377
Feb. 12-14	National Ethanol Conference	Marriott Hill Country Resort/Spa, San Antonio, TX	202-289-3835
Feb. 13-14	Agribusiness Showcase/Conf. (IA)	Iowa State Fairground, Des Moines, IA	515-262-8323
Feb. 13-16	Waterways Council Washington Meeting	Washington, DC	http://waterwayscouncil.org/
Feb. 18-20	Grain & Feed Association of Illinois	Peoria Civic Center, Peoria, IL	217-787-2417
Feb. 21	Ag Shipper Workshop	Fresno, CA	www.agtrans.org
Feb. 22	Ag Shipper Workshop	Sacramento, CA	www.agtrans.org
Feb. 22-23	USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum	Arlington, VA	https://www.usda.gov/oce/forum/
Feb. 25-Mar. 2	National Association of Wheat Growers Meeting	Anaheim, CA	https://www.wheatworld.org/
Feb. 27- Mar. 1	Commodity Classic	Anaheim, CA	http://www.commodityclassic.com/home/
Mar. 4-7	18th Annual Trans-Pacific Maritime Annual Conference	Long Beach, CA	http://events.joc.com/upcoming-events
Mar. 5-7	National Waterways Conference Legislative Summit	Washington, DC	https://waterways.org/
Mar. 6-8	Minnesota Grain & Feed Association	Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Prior Lake, MN	651-454-8212
Mar. 12-15	AFIA Spring Committee Meetings & Omni Purchasing & Ingredient Suppliers Conf.	Fort Worth Hotel, Fort Worth, TX	703-524-0810
Mar. 16-18	North American Rail Shippers Association 2018 Annual Meeting	Chicago, IL	https://www.railshippers.com/
Mar. 18-20	National Grain and Feed Association: Annual Convention	Westin Kierland Resort/Spa, Scottsdale, AZ	https://www.ngfa.org/upcoming-events/annual-convention/
Mar. 24-27	GEAPS Exchange Colorado	Convention Center, Denver, CO	763-999-4300
Mar. 24-27	North American Millers Association Spring Conference	Naples, FL	http://www.namamillers.org/meetings/
Mar. 25-27	International Oil Mill Supt. Association	Embassy Suites, Denver, CO	817-297-4668
Apr. 5-6	Ag Commodity Futures Conference	Overland Park, KS	http://www.k-state.edu/riskmanagement/conference.html
Apr. 7-10	American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association 2018 Connections	Gaylord Opryland, Nashville, TN	https://aslrra.org/aslrra2018connections
Apr. 9-13	Intl. Assn. of Operative Millers (IAOM) Conference and Expo	Renaissance Atlanta Waverly, Atlanta, GA	913-338-3377
Apr. 10-11	Transportation Research Forum 2018 Annual Meeting	University of Minnesota-Coffman Memorial Union, Minneapolis, MN	https://trforum.org/18-annual-forum-2/
Apr. 18-20	Texas Grain & Feed Association	Wyndham River Walk, San Antonio, TX	817-336-7875
Apr. 24-26	Intl. Powder & Bulk Solids Conf./Expo	Donald E. Stephens Conv. Center, Rosemont, IL	310-445-4200
Apr. 25-27	GEAPS/IAOM Annual Great Conference	Lakes Kalahari Resort, Sandusky, OH	574-658-5231
Jun. 11-13	International Fuel Ethanol Workshop/Expo	Century Link Center, Omaha, NE	866-746-8385
Jun. 12-15	USA Rice Millers Association Convention	White Sulphur Springs, WV	https://www.usarice.com/about/meetings
Jun. 27-29	Pacific Northwest Grain & Feed Assn.	Suncadia Resort, Cle Elum, WA	503-804-0633
Jul. 12-14	Florida Feed Association Annual Meeting	The Breakers, Palm Beach, FL	863-533-1535
Jul. 24-26	NGFA/GJ CONVEY 18	Conference Hilton Omaha, Omaha, NE	202-289-0873
Jul. 25-26	USDA NGFA Soy Transportation Coalition: Ag Transportation Summit	Arlington, VA	202-289-0873
Sep. 17-19	NGFA-PFI Feed & Pet Food Joint Conference	St. Louis, MO	http://feed.ngfa.org/joint-feedpet-food-conference/

Grain Transportation Indicators

Table 1

Grain Transport Cost Indicators¹

Grain Transport Cost Indicators						
	Truck	Rail		Barge	Ocean	
For the week ending		Unit Train	Shuttle		Gulf	Pacific
01/24/18	203	273	219	183	199	174
01/17/18	203	273	226	222	200	174

¹Indicator: 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); and ocean = routes to Japan (\$/metric ton)

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 2

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

Commodity	Origin--Destination	1/19/2018	1/12/2018
Corn	IL--Gulf	-0.63	-0.68
Corn	NE--Gulf	-0.78	-0.81
Soybean	IA--Gulf	-1.19	-1.22
HRW	KS--Gulf	-2.50	-2.60
HRS	ND--Portland	-1.65	-1.69

Note: nq = no quote; n/a = not available

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

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

Figure 1
Grain Bid Summary

Rail Transportation

Table 3

Rail Deliveries to Port (carloads)¹

For the Week Ending	Mississippi		Pacific	Atlantic &	Total	Week ending	Cross-Border Mexico ³
	Gulf	Texas Gulf	Northwest	East Gulf			
01/17/2018 ^p	975	1,675	6,885	235	9,770	1/13/2018	1,508
01/10/2018 ^r	223	1,351	6,673	231	8,478	1/6/2018	1,850
2018 YTD ^r	1,541	3,873	16,932	552	22,898	2018 YTD	4,811
2017 YTD ^r	2,429	5,561	16,402	2,443	26,835	2017 YTD	6,198
2018 YTD as % of 2017 YTD	63	70	103	23	85	% change YTD	78
Last 4 weeks as % of 2017 ²	54	66	102	25	83	Last 4wks % 2017	91
Last 4 weeks as % of 4-year avg. ²	49	82	110	26	91	Last 4wks % 4 yr	104
Total 2017	28,766	76,045	289,178	21,999	415,988	Total 2017	119,661
Total 2016	36,925	87,863	299,606	29,007	453,401	Total 2016	92,982

¹ Data is incomplete as it is voluntarily provided

² Compared with same 4-weeks in 2017 and prior 4-year average.

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

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

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Railroads originate approximately 24 percent of U.S. grain shipments. Trends in these loadings are indicative of market conditions and expectations.

Figure 2

Rail Deliveries to Port

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 4

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

For the week ending: 1/13/2018	East		West			U.S. total	Canada	
	CSXT	NS	BNSF	KCS	UP		CN	CP
This week	1,862	2,805	11,408	1,235	4,647	21,957	3,482	3,885
This week last year	1,958	3,040	12,702	885	5,816	24,401	3,335	4,103
2018 YTD	3,629	4,795	21,475	2,170	9,526	41,595	6,349	7,578
2017 YTD	3,967	6,131	22,754	1,521	11,590	45,963	6,652	7,980
2018 YTD as % of 2017 YTD	91	78	94	143	82	90	95	95
Last 4 weeks as % of 2017*	88	82	95	110	84	90	97	95
Last 4 weeks as % of 3-yr avg.**	81	80	100	103	88	92	92	92
Total 2017	89,465	142,789	578,964	50,223	289,574	1,151,015	198,773	244,766

*The past 4 weeks of this year as a percent of the same 4 weeks last year.

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

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

Figure 3

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

Source: Association of American Railroads

Table 5

Railcar Auction Offerings¹ (\$/car)²

For the week ending: 1/18/2018		Delivery period							
		Feb-18	Feb-17	Mar-18	Mar-17	Apr-18	Apr-17	May-18	May-17
BNSF ³	COT grain units	0	202	no bids	0	no bids	0	no bids	no bids
	COT grain single-car ⁵	0	339	0	203	no bids	41	0	37
UP ⁴	GCAS/Region 1	no bids	23	no bids	no bids	no offer	no offer	n/a	n/a
	GCAS/Region 2	10	163	no bids	no bids	no offer	no offer	n/a	n/a

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

²Average premium/discount to tariff, last auction

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

⁴UP - GCAS = Grain Car Allocation System

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

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

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

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA.

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

Figure 4

Bids/Offers for Railcars to be Delivered in February 2018, Secondary Market

Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.
Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 5

Bids/Offers for Railcars to be Delivered in March 2018, Secondary Market

Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.
Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 6

Bids/Offers for Railcars to be Delivered in April 2018, Secondary Market

Non-shuttle bids include unit-train and single-car bids. n/a = not available.
Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 6

Weekly Secondary Railcar Market (\$/car)¹

For the week ending: 1/18/2018		Delivery period					
		Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18
Non-shuttle	BNSF-GF	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2017	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP-Pool	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2017	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shuttle	BNSF-GF	250	50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	33	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2017	(950)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	UP-Pool	0	(100)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from last week	(50)	(50)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Change from same week 2017	(467)	(200)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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

Note: Bids listed are market INDICATORS only & are NOT guaranteed prices,

n/a = not available; GF = guaranteed freight; Pool = guaranteed pool

Sources: Transportation and Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

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

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

Table 7

Tariff Rail Rates for Unit and Shuttle Train Shipments¹

Train Rate Rates for Unit and Shuttle Train Shipments							Percent
January, 2018	Origin region ³	Destination region ³	Tariff rate/car	Fuel surcharge per car	Tariff plus surcharge per:		change Y/Y ⁴
					metric ton	bushel ²	
Unit train							
Wheat	Wichita, KS	St. Louis, MO	\$3,883	\$86	\$39.41	\$1.07	4
	Grand Forks, ND	Duluth-Superior, MN	\$4,143	\$0	\$41.14	\$1.12	0
	Wichita, KS	Los Angeles, CA	\$7,050	\$0	\$70.01	\$1.91	1
	Wichita, KS	New Orleans, LA	\$4,540	\$151	\$46.59	\$1.27	5
	Sioux Falls, SD	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$6,786	\$0	\$67.39	\$1.83	1
	Northwest KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$4,816	\$166	\$49.47	\$1.35	5
	Amarillo, TX	Los Angeles, CA	\$5,021	\$231	\$52.15	\$1.42	6
Corn	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$3,931	\$171	\$40.74	\$1.03	9
	Toledo, OH	Raleigh, NC	\$6,344	\$0	\$63.00	\$1.60	5
	Des Moines, IA	Davenport, IA	\$2,258	\$36	\$22.78	\$0.58	1
	Indianapolis, IN	Atlanta, GA	\$5,446	\$0	\$54.08	\$1.37	5
	Indianapolis, IN	Knoxville, TN	\$4,540	\$0	\$45.08	\$1.15	5
	Des Moines, IA	Little Rock, AR	\$3,609	\$106	\$36.90	\$0.94	4
	Des Moines, IA	Los Angeles, CA	\$5,327	\$310	\$55.98	\$1.42	6
Soybeans	Minneapolis, MN	New Orleans, LA	\$3,631	\$156	\$37.61	\$1.02	3
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	\$5,287	\$0	\$52.50	\$1.43	5
	Indianapolis, IN	Raleigh, NC	\$6,460	\$0	\$64.15	\$1.75	5
	Indianapolis, IN	Huntsville, AL	\$4,764	\$0	\$47.31	\$1.29	5
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$4,745	\$171	\$48.82	\$1.33	8
Shuttle Train							
Wheat	Great Falls, MT	Portland, OR	\$3,953	\$0	\$39.26	\$1.07	0
	Wichita, KS	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$4,171	\$0	\$41.42	\$1.13	2
	Chicago, IL	Albany, NY	\$5,663	\$0	\$56.24	\$1.53	3
	Grand Forks, ND	Portland, OR	\$5,611	\$0	\$55.72	\$1.52	0
	Grand Forks, ND	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$5,931	\$0	\$58.90	\$1.60	0
	Northwest KS	Portland, OR	\$5,812	\$272	\$60.42	\$1.64	6
	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	\$5,000	\$0	\$49.65	\$1.26	0
Corn	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	\$4,960	\$0	\$49.26	\$1.25	0
	Champaign-Urbana, IL	New Orleans, LA	\$3,731	\$171	\$38.75	\$0.98	10
	Lincoln, NE	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$3,700	\$0	\$36.74	\$0.93	0
	Des Moines, IA	Amarillo, TX	\$3,970	\$134	\$40.75	\$1.04	4
	Minneapolis, MN	Tacoma, WA	\$5,000	\$0	\$49.65	\$1.26	0
	Council Bluffs, IA	Stockton, CA	\$4,820	\$0	\$47.86	\$1.22	2
	Sioux Falls, SD	Tacoma, WA	\$5,600	\$0	\$55.61	\$1.51	0
Soybeans	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	\$5,650	\$0	\$56.11	\$1.53	0
	Fargo, ND	Tacoma, WA	\$5,500	\$0	\$54.62	\$1.49	0
	Council Bluffs, IA	New Orleans, LA	\$4,775	\$197	\$49.38	\$1.34	8
	Toledo, OH	Huntsville, AL	\$4,352	\$0	\$43.22	\$1.18	3
	Grand Island, NE	Portland, OR	\$5,710	\$278	\$59.47	\$1.62	7

¹ 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.

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

³ Regional economic areas are defined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

⁴ Percentage change year over year calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surcharge

Table 8

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

Date: January, 2018			Fuel		Tariff plus surcharge per:		Percent
Commodity	Origin state	Destination region	Tariff rate/car ¹	surcharge per car ²	metric ton ³	bushel ³	change ⁴ Y/Y
Wheat	MT	Chihuahua, CI	\$7,459	\$0	\$76.21	\$2.07	0
	OK	Cuautitlan, EM	\$6,631	\$118	\$68.96	\$1.87	1
	KS	Guadalajara, JA	\$7,309	\$269	\$77.42	\$2.10	2
	TX	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$4,292	\$72	\$44.59	\$1.21	2
Corn	IA	Guadalajara, JA	\$8,313	\$248	\$87.47	\$2.22	2
	SD	Celaya, GJ	\$7,700	\$0	\$78.68	\$2.00	2
	NE	Queretaro, QA	\$8,013	\$244	\$84.38	\$2.14	3
	SD	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$6,743	\$0	\$68.90	\$1.75	2
	MO	Tlalnepantla, EM	\$7,379	\$238	\$77.83	\$1.98	3
	SD	Torreon, CU	\$7,300	\$0	\$74.59	\$1.89	2
Soybeans	MO	Bojay (Tula), HG	\$8,134	\$230	\$85.47	\$2.32	-6
	NE	Guadalajara, JA	\$8,692	\$253	\$91.39	\$2.48	-2
	IA	El Castillo, JA	\$8,960	\$0	\$91.55	\$2.49	0
	KS	Torreon, CU	\$7,489	\$188	\$78.43	\$2.13	1
Sorghum	NE	Celaya, GJ	\$7,345	\$231	\$77.40	\$1.96	3
	KS	Queretaro, QA	\$7,819	\$148	\$81.40	\$2.07	4
	NE	Salinas Victoria, NL	\$6,452	\$119	\$67.13	\$1.70	5
	NE	Torreon, CU	\$6,790	\$182	\$71.23	\$1.81	4

¹Rates are based upon published tariff rates for high-capacity shuttle trains. Shuttle trains are available for qualified

shipments of 75–110 cars that meet railroad efficiency requirements.

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

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

⁴Percentage change calculated using tariff rate plus fuel surcharge

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

Figure 7

Railroad Fuel Surcharges, North American Weighted Average¹

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

* Beginning January 2009, the Canadian Pacific fuel surcharge is computed by a monthly average of the bi-weekly fuel surcharge.

**CSX strike price changed from \$2.00/gal. to \$3.75/gal. starting January 1, 2015.

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

Barge Transportation

Figure 8

Illinois River Barge Freight Rate^{1,2}

¹Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); ²4-week moving average of the 3-year average.

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Table 9

Weekly Barge Freight Rates: Southbound Only

		Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Lower Illinois River	St. Louis	Cincinnati	Lower Ohio	Cairo-Memphis
Rate ¹	1/23/2018	-	-	329	266	265	265	185
	1/16/2018	-	-	400	278	320	320	195
\$/ton	1/23/2018	-	-	15.27	10.61	12.43	10.71	5.81
	1/16/2018	-	-	18.56	11.09	15.01	12.93	6.12
Current week % change from the same week:								
	Last year	-	-	-12	-11	-12	-12	-26
	3-year avg. ²	-	-	-9	4	-6	-6	-6
Rate ¹	February	-	-	316	241	244	244	183
	April	364	305	290	213	216	216	180

¹Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); ²4-week moving average; ton = 2,000 pounds; "-" = closed

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 9

Benchmark tariff rates

Calculating barge rate per ton:

$(\text{Rate} * 1976 \text{ tariff benchmark rate per ton}) / 100$

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

Figure 10

Barge Movements on the Mississippi River¹ (Locks 27 - Granite City, IL)

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

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Table 10

Barge Grain Movements (1,000 tons)

For the week ending 01/20/2018	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River					
Rock Island, IL (L15)	0	0	0	0	0
Winfield, MO (L25)	0	0	0	0	0
Alton, IL (L26)	39	0	18	0	57
Granite City, IL (L27)	39	0	18	0	57
Illinois River (L8)	72	0	47	0	120
Ohio River (L52)	153	3	222	0	378
Arkansas River (L1)	0	14	49	0	63
Weekly total - 2018	192	17	288	0	497
Weekly total - 2017	346	26	354	11	736
2018 YTD ¹	366	51	577	0	993
2017 YTD	872	113	1,049	55	2,089
2018 as % of 2017 YTD	42	45	55	0	48
Last 4 weeks as % of 2017 ²	53	54	61	3	56
Total 2017	22,242	2,210	16,123	360	40,936

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

² As a percent of same period in 2017.

Note: Total may not add exactly, due to rounding

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Figure 11

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

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Figure 12

Grain Barges for Export in New Orleans Region

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

Truck Transportation

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

Table 11

Retail on-Highway Diesel Prices, Week Ending 01/22/2018 (US \$/gallon)

Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	3.078	0.015	0.451
	New England	3.136	0.022	0.460
	Central Atlantic	3.276	0.013	0.492
	Lower Atlantic	2.929	0.016	0.422
II	Midwest ²	2.971	-0.010	0.459
III	Gulf Coast ³	2.815	-0.010	0.401
IV	Rocky Mountain	2.955	-0.029	0.423
V	West Coast	3.395	-0.006	0.549
	West Coast less California	3.083	-0.015	0.333
	California	3.643	0.002	0.720
Total	U.S.	3.025	-0.003	0.456

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

²Same as North Central ³Same as South Central

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

Figure 13

Weekly Diesel Fuel Prices, U.S. Average

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

Grain Exports

Table 12

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

For the week ending	Wheat						Corn	Soybeans	Total
	HRW	SRW	HRS	SWW	DUR	All wheat			
Export Balances¹									
1/11/2018	1,990	696	1,500	1,082	58	5,327	16,790	11,790	33,907
This week year ago	1,967	618	2,427	1,075	139	6,226	19,770	13,187	39,183
Cumulative exports-marketing year²									
2017/18 YTD	5,875	1,322	3,702	3,255	214	14,367	12,207	30,904	57,478
2016/17 YTD	6,769	1,283	4,544	2,499	263	15,357	17,934	36,115	69,405
YTD 2017/18 as % of 2016/17	87	103	81	130	81	94	68	86	83
Last 4 wks as % of same period 2016/17	108	121	65	124	72	134	82	94	92
2016/17 Total	11,096	2,285	7,923	4,254	484	26,042	41,864	51,156	119,062
2015/16 Total	5,538	3,057	6,285	3,551	670	19,101	45,564	49,821	114,486

¹ Current unshipped (outstanding) export sales to date

² Shipped export sales to date; new marketing year now in effect for wheat, corn, and soybeans

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

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

Table 13

Top 5 Importers¹ of U.S. Corn

For the week ending 1/11/2018			% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-year avg 2014-2016
	2017/18 Current MY	2016/17 Last MY		
Mexico	9,848	10,063	(2)	12,297
Japan	4,887	5,715	(14)	11,450
Korea	1,229	3,123	(61)	4,494
Colombia	2,108	2,338	(10)	4,179
Peru	1,764	1,886	(6)	2,693
Top 5 Importers	19,835	23,124	(14)	35,113
Total US corn export sales	28,997	37,704	(23)	49,308
% of Projected	59%	65%		
Change from prior week²	1,888	1,368		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. corn export sales	68%	61%		71%
USDA forecast, January 2018	48,982	58,346	(16)	
Corn Use for Ethanol USDA forecast, January 2018	140,335	138,151	2	

¹ Based on FAS Marketing Year Ranking Reports for 2016/17 - www.fas.usda.gov; Marketing year (MY) = Sep 1 - Aug 31.

² Cumulative Exports (shipped) + Outstanding Sales (unshipped), FAS Weekly Export Sales Report, or Export Sales Query--
http://www.fas.usda.gov/esquery/. Total commitments change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous
week's outstanding sales or accumulated sales.

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

Table 14

Top 5 Importers¹ of U.S. Soybeans

For the week ending 1/11/2018	Commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr avg. 2014-2016
	2017/18 Current MY	2016/17 Last MY		
	- 1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
China	25,707	32,323	(20)	31,881
Mexico	2,365	2,259	5	3,452
Indonesia	1,004	1,171	(14)	1,987
Japan	1,315	1,401	(6)	2,067
Netherlands	756	887	(15)	2,098
Top 5 importers	31,146	38,041	(18)	41,486
Total US soybean export sales	36,115	42,694	(15)	52,919
% of Projected	61%	72%		
Change from prior week ²	1,240	980		
Top 5 importers' share of U.S. soybean export sales	86%	89%		78%
USDA forecast, January 2018	58,856	59,237	99	

(n) indicates negative number.

¹Based on FAS Marketing Year Ranking Reports for 2016/17 - www.fas.usda.gov; Marketing year (MY) = Sep 1 - Aug 31.²Cumulative Exports (shipped) + Outstanding Sales (unshipped), FAS Weekly Export Sales Report, or Export Sales Query--<http://www.fas.usda.gov/esquery/>. The total commitments change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from previous week's outstanding sales and/or accumulated sales³FAS Marketing Year Final Reports - www.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/myfi_rpt.htm. (Carryover plus Accumulated Exports)

Table 15

Top 10 Importers¹ of All U.S. Wheat

For the week ending 1/11/2018	Total Commitments ²		% change current MY from last MY	Exports ³ 3-yr avg 2014-2016
	2017/18 Current MY	2016/17 Last MY		
	- 1,000 mt -			- 1,000 mt -
Japan	2,239	2,034	10	2,620
Mexico	2,379	2,241	6	2,743
Philippines	2,185	2,046	7	2,395
Brazil	111	1,107	(90)	862
Nigeria	1,016	1,130	(10)	1,254
Korea	1,311	1,101	19	1,104
China	817	963	(15)	1,623
Taiwan	927	845	10	768
Indonesia	1,002	708	42	726
Colombia	517	647	(20)	635
Top 10 importers	12,503	12,822	(2)	14,729
Total US wheat export sales	19,694	21,583	(9)	22,804
% of Projected	74%	75%		
Change from prior week ²	153	243		
Top 10 importers' share of U.S. wheat export sales	63%	59%		65%
USDA forecast, January 2018	26,567	28,747	(8)	

(n) indicates negative number.

¹Based on FAS Marketing Year Ranking Reports for 2016/17 - www.fas.usda.gov; Marketing year = Jun 1 - May 31.²Cumulative Exports (shipped) + Outstanding Sales (unshipped), FAS Weekly Export Sales Report, or Export Sales Query--<http://www.fas.usda.gov/esquery/>. Total commitments change (net sales) from prior week could include revisions from the previous week's outstanding and/or accumulated sales³FAS Marketing Year Final Reports - www.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/myfi_rpt.htm.

Table 16

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

Port Regions	For the Week Ending 01/18/18	Previous Week ¹	Current Week as % of Previous	2018 YTD	2017 YTD	2018 YTD as % of 2017 YTD	Last 4-weeks as % of:		2017 Total
							Last Year	Prior 3-yr. avg.	
Pacific Northwest									
Wheat	241	243	99	484	394	123	107	88	14,805
Corn	213	156	137	440	685	64	79	148	10,928
Soybeans	560	271	206	1,040	839	124	103	85	13,246
Total	1,014	670	151	1,963	1,918	102	96	97	38,978
Mississippi Gulf									
Wheat	61	107	57	233	170	137	134	130	4,198
Corn	315	288	109	928	1,392	67	73	78	28,690
Soybeans	778	863	90	2,111	2,543	83	82	83	32,911
Total	1,154	1,257	92	3,272	4,105	80	81	83	65,800
Texas Gulf									
Wheat	33	0	n/a	49	266	18	29	50	6,354
Corn	0	0	n/a	0	85	0	0	0	733
Soybeans	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	0	292
Total	33	0	n/a	49	352	14	24	31	7,379
Interior									
Wheat	21	32	66	54	123	44	52	78	1,727
Corn	129	134	96	366	323	113	111	121	8,733
Soybeans	114	108	106	271	287	94	101	114	5,496
Total	264	274	96	690	734	94	97	112	15,956
Great Lakes									
Wheat	0	8	0	8	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	711
Corn	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	192
Soybeans	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	0	890
Total	0	8	0	8	0	n/a	n/a	35	1,793
Atlantic									
Wheat	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	0	46
Corn	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	n/a	0	32
Soybeans	42	67	62	115	201	58	58	53	1,996
Total	42	67	62	115	201	58	58	51	2,075
U.S. total from ports									
Wheat	356	389	91	828	954	87	82	86	27,841
Corn	657	578	114	1,734	2,485	70	77	97	49,308
Soybeans	1,494	1,309	114	3,537	3,869	91	86	82	54,831
Total	2,507	2,277	110	6,098	7,308	83	83	86	131,980

¹ Data includes revisions from prior weeks; some regional and U.S. totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

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

The United States exports approximately one-quarter of the grain it produces. On average, this includes nearly 45 percent of U.S.-grown wheat, 35 percent of U.S.-grown soybeans, and 20 percent of the U.S.-grown corn. Approximately 55 percent of the U.S. export grain shipments departed through the U.S. Gulf region in 2017.

Figure 14

U.S. grain inspected for export (wheat, corn, and soybeans) Source: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration/USDA (www.gipsa.usda.gov)

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

Figure 15

U.S. Grain Inspections: U.S. Gulf and PNW¹ (wheat, corn, and soybeans) Week ending 01/18/18 inspections (mbu):

Mississippi Gulf:	43.2
PNW:	37.8
Texas Gulf:	1.2

Percent change from:

	<u>MS Gulf</u>	<u>TX Gulf</u>	<u>U.S. Gulf</u>	<u>PNW</u>
Last Week:	down 8	n/a	down 5	up 51
Last Year (same week):	down 28	down 65	down 30	up 63
3-yr avg. (4-wk. mov. Avg):	down 15	down 66	down 18	up 52

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

Ocean Transportation

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
1/18/2018	45	32	66	16
1/11/2018	42	36	59	14
2017 range	(25..66)	(28..54)	(37..87)	(5..44)
2017 avg.	46	38	56	20

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

Figure 16

U.S. Gulf Vessel Loading Activity

Source: Transportation & Marketing Programs/AMS/USDA

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

Figure 17

Grain Vessel Rates, U.S. to Japan

Data Source: O'Neil Commodity Consulting

Table 18

Ocean Freight Rates For Selected Shipments, Week Ending 01/20/2018

Export region	Import region	Grain types	Loading date	Volume loads (metric tons)	Freight rate (US\$/metric ton)
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Jan 1/10	60,000	45.50
Rouen	Morocco	Heavy Grain	Jan 6/12	30,000	15.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Dec 15/20	60,000	44.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Dec 10/20	60,000	43.25
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 27/Dec 5	47,700	40.50
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 20/30	66,000	41.25
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 20/30	66,000	42.00
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 15/25	65,000	43.85
U.S. Gulf	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 10/20	66,000	43.75
U.S. Gulf	Somalia	Sorghum	Dec 1/10	10,640	192.10*
PNW	China	Heavy Grain	Dec 23/30	60,000	22.25
PNW	China	Heavy Grain	Dec 15/24	60,000	23.75
PNW	South Korea	Heavy Grain	Dec 14/20	60,000	24.00
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Dec 1/10	60,000	31.90
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 20/30	60,000	33.75
Brazil	China	Heavy Grain	Nov 1/10	60,000	31.90
Brazil	S. Korea	Heavy Grain	Nov 22/29	63,000	33.25

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

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

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

In 2016, containers were used to transport 7 percent of total U.S. waterborne grain exports. Approximately 63 percent of U.S. waterborne grain exports in 2016 went to Asia, of which 10 percent were moved in containers. Approximately 94 percent of U.S. waterborne containerized grain exports were destined for Asia.

Figure 18

Top 10 Destination Markets for U.S. Containerized Grain Exports, January-September 2017

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

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

Figure 19

Monthly Shipments of Containerized Grain to Asia

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

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

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Preferred citation: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. *Grain Transportation Report*. January 25, 2018. Web: <http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/TS056.01-25-2018>

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