

Shipments of Grain by Rail in Alabama

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This summary of grain shipments by rail in Alabama is drawn from *State Grain Rail Statistical Summary*,¹ a report that describes the grain and oilseed shipped by rail in the United States from 2006 to 2010. The full report collects information on rail shipments from each State and to each State and examines some of the factors that influence the amount of grain grown and used. It examines rail shipments, rail receipts, grain and oilseed production, animal and poultry production, grain and oilseed exports, and grain and oilseed rail rates per ton-mile to explain the variations between States in shipments of these commodities.

Alabama ranks 31st among the grain and oilseed producing States, with a 2006–2010 average yearly production of 72.1 million bushels (mbu).² On average, from 2006 to 2010, corn production comprised 32 percent of Alabama crops, peanuts 31 percent, cottonseeds 14 percent, soybeans 13 percent, wheat 10 percent, and oats 1 percent.

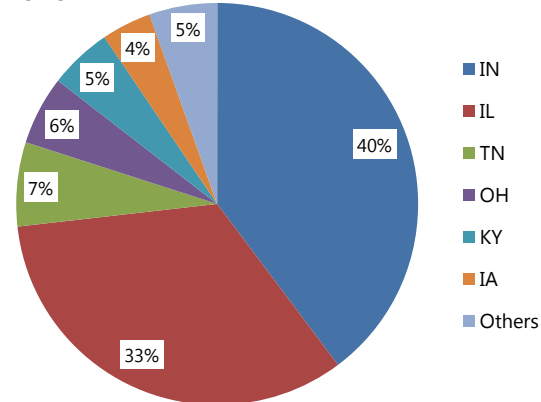
Nationally, Alabama is ranked 13th in animal and poultry production, averaging 12.8 million Grain Consuming Animal Units (GCAU) from 2006 to 2010.

During the crop marketing years from 2001 to 2004, railroad originations of grain and oilseeds averaged a market share of 16.4 percent, dropping to an average of 12.2 percent during 2007–2010.

1 Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/TS066.06-2013>

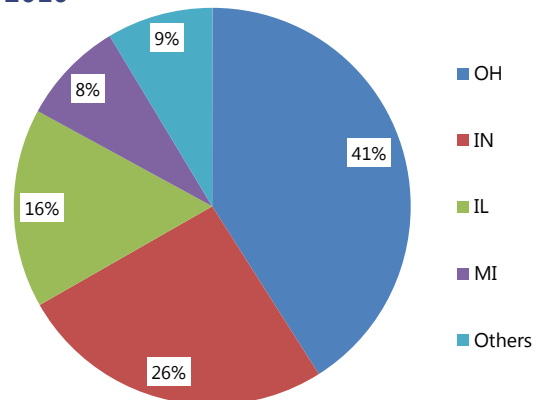
2 Grain and oilseeds include barley, corn, cottonseeds, flaxseed, oats, peanuts, rough rice, rye, sorghum, soybeans, and wheat.

Figure 1. Sources of Alabama Rail Corn Receipts, 2006–2010



Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

Figure 2. Sources of Alabama Rail Soybean Receipts, 2006–2010



Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

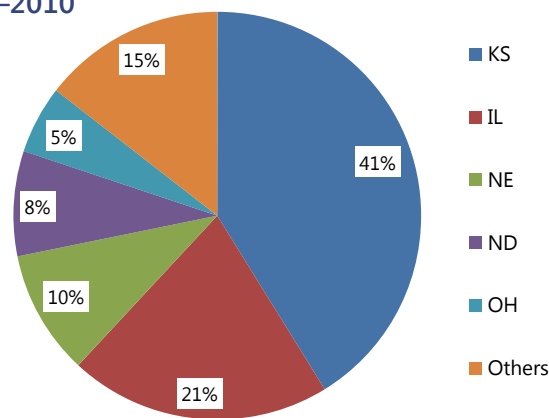
Alabama has the Port of Mobile, which exports grain and oilseeds. For each year from 2006 to 2010, an average of 1.2 million metric tons of grain and oilseeds was inspected for export from Alabama.

Alabama received a total of 10.2 million tons of corn by rail during the 2006–2010 marketing years, up 36.1 percent from 7.3 million tons during the 1996–2000 marketing years. (fig. 1)

Alabama received a total of 7.4 million tons of soybeans by rail during the 2006–2010 marketing years, down 6.2 percent from 7.9 million tons during the 1996–2000 marketing years. (fig. 2)

Alabama received a total of 2.9 million tons of wheat by rail during the 2006–2010 marketing years, up 749 percent from 0.3 million tons during the 1996–2000 marketing years. (fig. 3)

Figure 3. Sources of Alabama Rail Wheat Receipts, 2006–2010



Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

Table 1. Alabama Grain and Oilseed Production and Rail Shipments, 2006-2010

	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Total Grain and Oilseeds	GCAUs*
Average Yearly Production	22.83 mbu†	9.06 mbu	7.25 mbu	72.05 mbu	12,759,889
Average Yearly Exports (metric tons)	534,818	561,237	60,442	1,156,498	-
Total Rail Receipts (tons)	10,163,208	7,377,280	2,901,240	-	-

* Grain Consuming Animal Units

† Million bushels

Data and Methodology

Data from the Surface Transportation Board's Confidential Waybill Samples over the period 1996-2010 were analyzed to measure grain and oilseed shipments by rail. The data were aggregated and sorted by a number of characteristics, the major categories being shipment origin, destination, and type of grain or oilseed. This information was then organized by both origin and destination State. The data were also sorted by shipment size for each State, showing the relative frequencies of grain and oilseed shipments of different sizes. Data having less than 30 observations are excluded, as are States having data for only 1 or 2 years of the 5-year period. Despite these precautions, States with relatively low volumes are more subject to year-to-year variation than are States with higher volumes because of the number of available observations used to calculate totals. This is a result of the sampling techniques used in the Waybill Samples. Thus, higher volumes are less likely to suffer from sampling limitations and be more representative of actual rail movements for any given year than are lower volumes.

GCAUs were calculated for each State using information on animal populations and the corresponding levels of feed necessary to maintain the populations. These calculations included meat and poultry for consumption and production purposes. Cows, sheep, turkeys, hogs, and chickens were included.

The export inspection numbers in this report were taken from USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration grain and oilseed export inspections at U.S. ports exporting grain and oilseeds in bulk. Grain and oilseed production levels by State were also calculated.

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