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Shipments of Grain by Rail in Nebraska

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This summary of grain shipments by rail in Nebraska 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.

Nebraska ranks third among the grain and oilseed producing States, with a 2006–2010 average yearly production of 1.8 billion bushels (bbu).

On average from 2006 to 2010, corn comprised 81 percent of Nebraska crops, soybeans 14 percent, wheat 4 percent, and sorghum 1 percent.

Nationally, Nebraska is ranked fourth in animal and poultry production, averaging 30.4 million Grain Consuming Animal Units (GCAU)[2] from 2006 to 2010.

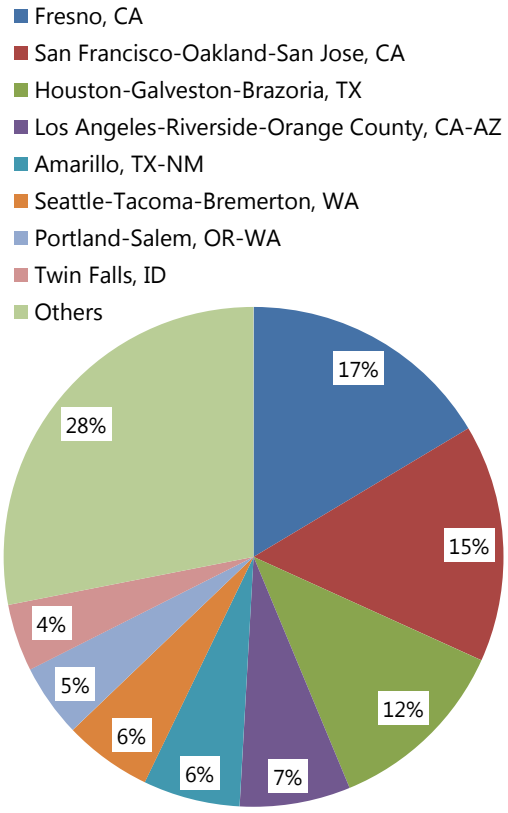
Railroad originations of grain and oilseeds during the crop marketing years 2007–2010 had an average market share of 35.2 percent, which is a decrease from the 2001–2004 average of 37.5 percent.

During the period 2006–2010, Nebraska shipped 59.5 million tons of corn by rail, down 5.2 percent from 62.7 million tons from 1996 to 2000. (fig. 1)

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

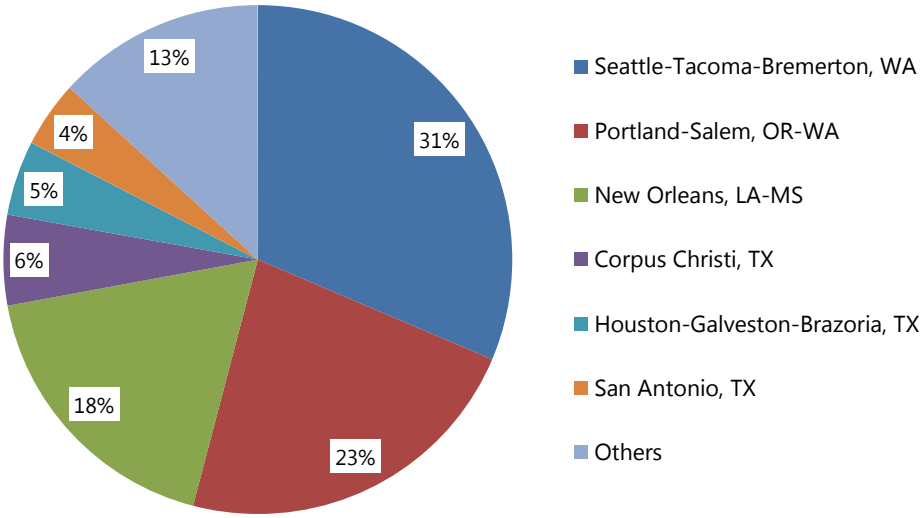
2 A standard unit used to compare feed needs of different livestock and poultry.

Figure 1. Business Economic Areas Receiving Nebraska Corn by Rail, 2006–2010



Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

Figure 2. Business Economic Areas Receiving Nebraska Soybeans by Rail, 2006–2010



Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

From 2006 to 2010, Nebraska shipped 15 million tons of soybeans by rail, up 65 percent from 9.1 million tons shipped in the period 1996–2000. (fig. 2)

Nebraska received a total of 401,000 tons of soybeans by rail during the 2006–2010 marketing years, down 37.2 percent from 639,000 tons during the 1996–2000 marketing years. (fig. 3)

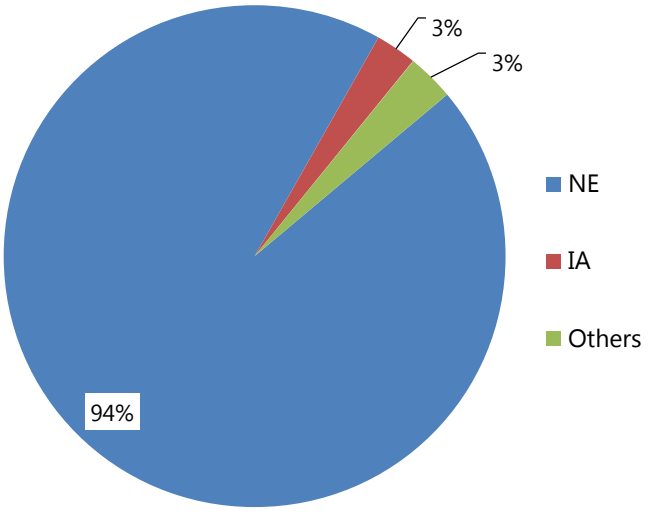
In the years 2006–2010, 13.2 million tons of wheat were shipped by rail from Nebraska, a 17.9-percent increase from 11.2 million tons from 1996 to 2000. (fig. 4)

Nebraska received a total of 785,000 tons of wheat by rail during the 2006–2010 marketing years, down 31.9 percent from 1.2 million tons during the 1996–2000 marketing years. (fig. 5)

Six percent of the grain car shipments originating in Nebraska from 2006 to 2010 were 1–5 cars in size, 15 percent were 6–49 cars, 5 percent were 50–74 cars, and the remaining 74 percent of shipments were 75 cars or greater. (fig. 6)

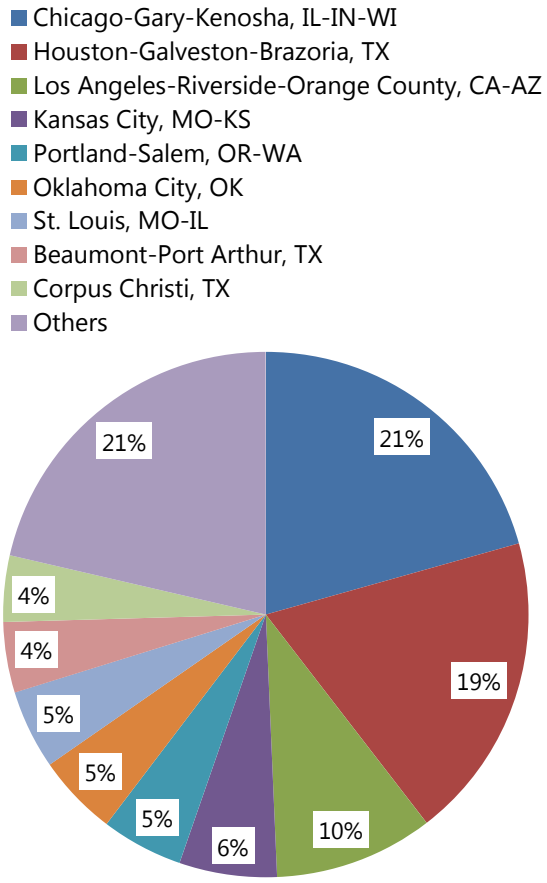
Average tariff rail rates for shipments originating in Nebraska were 2.7 cents per ton-mile from 2006 to 2010. Rates ranged from 1.98 cents per ton-mile in 1999 to 3.07 cents in 2010. Rates increased 47 percent from 2005 to 2010. (fig. 7)

Figure 3. Sources of Nebraska Rail Soybean Receipts, 2006–2010



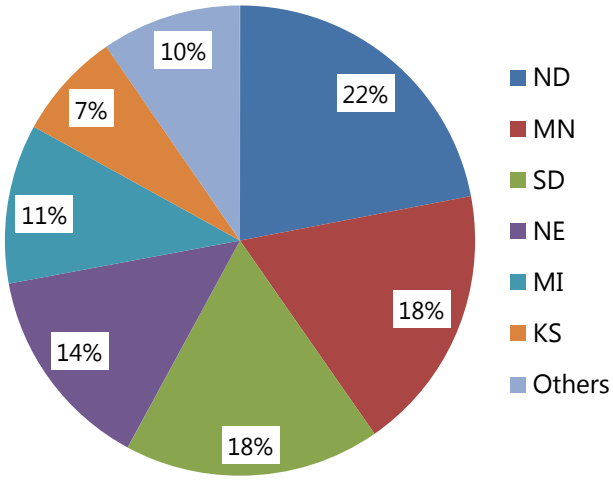
Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

Figure 4. Business Economic Areas Receiving Nebraska Wheat by Rail, 2006–2010



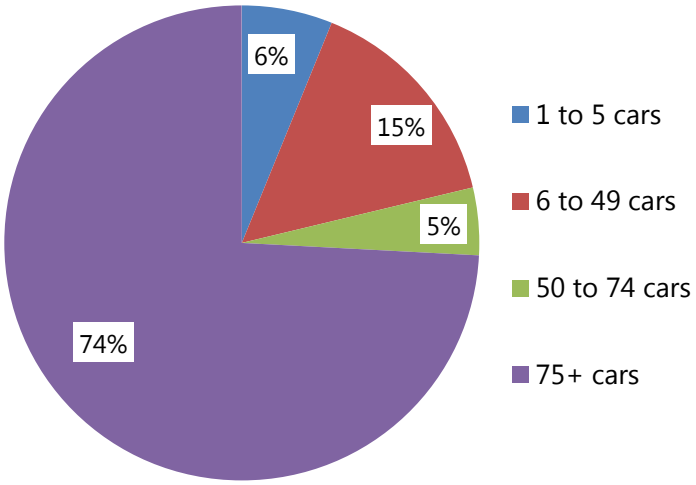
Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

Figure 5. Sources of Nebraska Rail Wheat Receipts, 2006–2010



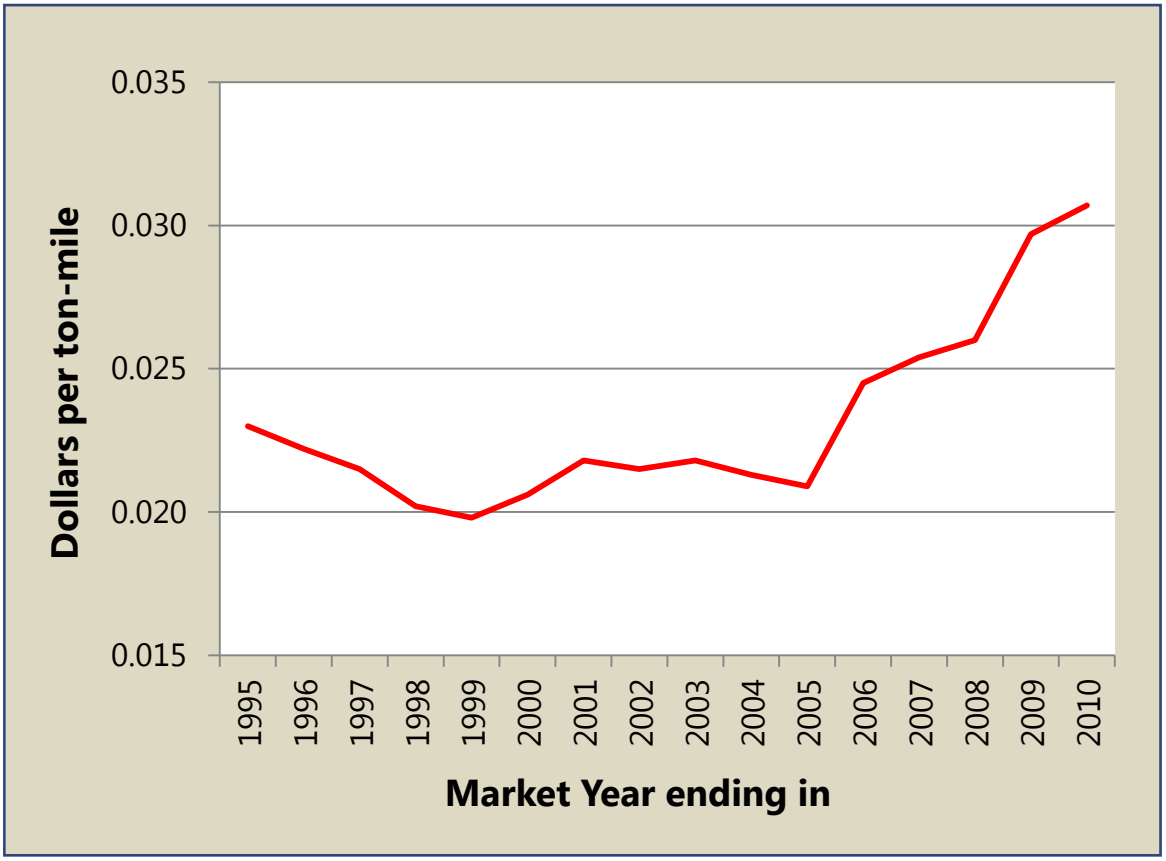
Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

Figure 6. Nebraska Grain Originations by Shipment Size



Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

Figure 7. Average Nebraska Rail Tariff Rates



Source: USDA analysis of Surface Transportation Board Confidential Waybill Samples

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

	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Total Grain and Oilseeds	GCAUs*
Average Yearly Production	1417.61 mbu†	240.00 mbu	71.97 mbu	1747.78 mbu	30,366,640
Total Rail Receipts (tons)	-	400,967	784,728	-	-
Total Rail Shipments (tons)	59,470,185	14,999,524	13,222,266	-	-

* 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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