

Freight Rail and Agriculture: Feeding the World

Among the silos and through the amber waves of grain runs the track of America's freight railroads. U.S. railroads and farmers have a relationship extending back nearly 200 years to when railroads became the critical link between rural farms and emerging urban centers in an increasingly industrialized country.

Today, that continued partnership is responsible for delivering much of the food found on dinner tables across the country and around the world.

Current Stats: In 2016, U.S. Class I railroads moved 1.61 million carloads of agriculture products (5.7% of total carloads) carrying 152.6 million tons (10.1% of total tons) and earning gross revenue of \$6.1 billion (9.3% of total revenue).

International Trade Impact: While railroads and farmers once served as the link between rural communities and urban centers, the two industries now link America to much of the world — particularly Canada and Mexico. One in every 10 planted acres feeds people of these countries. The agriculture sector exported nearly \$43 billion worth of goods to Canada and Mexico in 2016, accounting for 38% of the total value of U.S. agricultural exports. Additionally, 33% of American farming acreage is dedicated to global markets.

At a Glance

- **Grain**

Corn, soybeans, oats, wheat, rice, rye, sorghum and barley are used for a variety of purposes ranging from products for human consumption (flour and corn syrup) to animal feed and ethanol production. In 2016, U.S. Class I railroads moved nearly 150 million tons of grain.

- **Food Products**

Railroads bring all kinds of food to our tables, including canned goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen chickens, sugar, beer, wine and pasta. U.S. Class I railroads moved more than 99 million tons of food products in 2016 alone.

- **Fertilizers**

Tank cars carry millions of tons of raw materials used to produce fertilizer each year, including phosphate rock, crude potash and sulfur. In 2016, U.S. Class I railroads delivered 15.3 million tons of fertilizers and other agricultural chemicals.