

2026

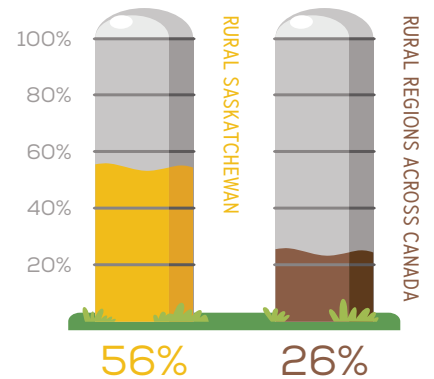
RURAL EXPORT PERFORMANCE IN SASKATCHEWAN





SASKATCHEWAN RURAL REGIONS CONTRIBUTIONS TO TRADE AND EXPORT

Saskatchewan's rural regions play a major role in driving the province's trade and export economy, contributing well above the national rural average. In 2023, rural Saskatchewan generated 56% of the province's total export value, compared to rural regions across Canada contributing 26% nationally. Rural regions area defined as non-census metropolitan areas.¹



EXPORTERS **61%**



971

RURAL EXPORTING BUSINESSES

IMPORTERS **54%**



2,234

RURAL IMPORTING BUSINESSES

ENGAGED AND ACTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNITIES

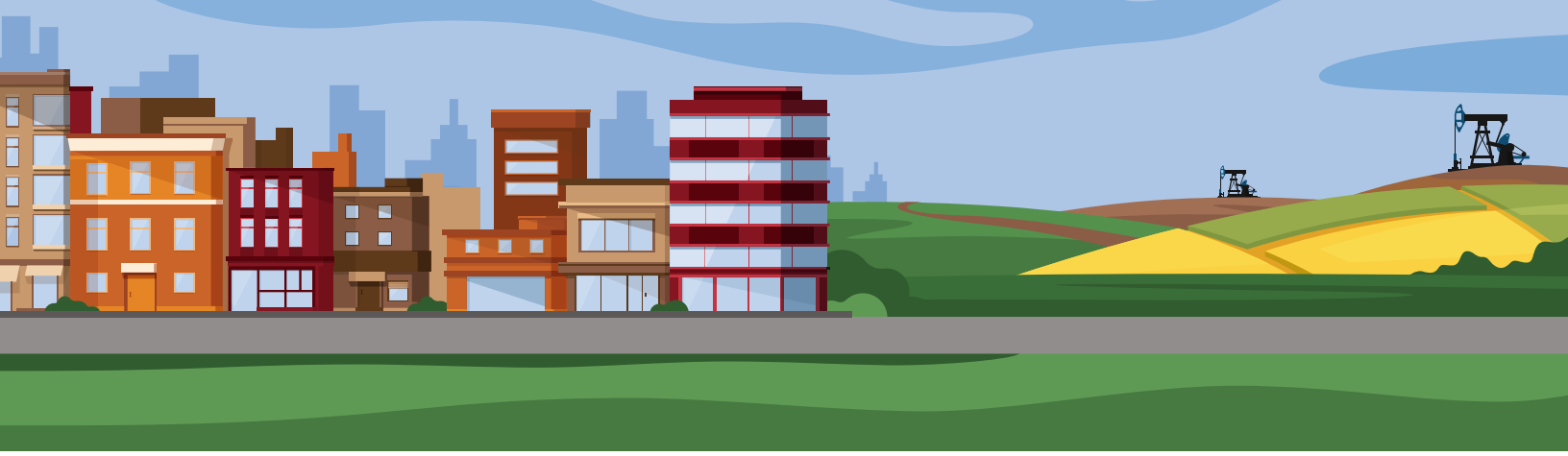
This strong contribution is supported by an active and engaged rural business community. Rural Saskatchewan is home to 971 exporting businesses, representing 61% of all exporters in the province. In addition, 2,234 rural businesses are involved in importing activities, accounting for 54% of Saskatchewan importers.

TRADE NUMBERS FOR RURAL SASKATCHEWAN

The scale of rural trade activity is significant. Rural Saskatchewan businesses generated more than \$19.3 million in exports and approximately \$1.74 million in imports. These figures demonstrate that rural communities are not only important contributors to Saskatchewan's economy, but also key participants in international trade and supply chains.



¹ Census metropolitan areas (CMAs): A CMAa must have a total population of at least 100,000, based on data from the current Census of Population Program, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core based on adjusted data from the previous Census of Population Program. Canada has 41 CMAs, Alberta has four (Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, and Red Deer), Saskatchewan has two (Regina, and Saskatoon), and Manitoba has one (Winnipeg).



COMPARISONS

Compared to the national picture, Saskatchewan's rural economy is particularly export-oriented. While rural Canada generated 26% of total export value through 23% of businesses, rural Saskatchewan generated 56% of export value through 61% of businesses. This highlights the outsized role Saskatchewan's rural regions play in supporting economic growth, trade diversification, and export development across the province.

Of the three prairie provinces Saskatchewan's rural economy is the most export-oriented.

RURAL SASKATCHEWAN



RURAL CANADA



RURAL MANITOBA



RURAL ALBERTA



Acknowledgement: Credit to Alexander Lavoie, Policy and Initiatives Manager, of Rural Manitoba Economic Development (RMED) Corp. for his providing his insights for Rural Manitoba, which formed the template for this document.

See: Lavoie, Alexander. "How Rural Manitoba Outpaces Rural Canada in Trade and Export Contributions." <https://rmedcorp.ca/how-rural-manitoba-outpaces-rural-canada-in-trade-and-export-contributions/>

Facts and figure retrieved from: *Trade in Goods by Exporter and Importer Characteristics: Interactive Tool* (accessed: May 20, 2026)





Saskatchewan Rural and Small Town Areas

Contributions to Trade and Export

A. Introduction

Statistics Canada’s *Rural Canada Trade Profiles (RCTP)*¹ are a dataset and analytical framework designed to measure how Canada’s rural and small-town regions² contribute to international trade and export activity. The profiles break down the value of goods exports by industry and geography, allowing researchers, policymakers, economic development organizations, and businesses to better understand the economic role rural communities play in Canada’s trade economy.

Rather than looking only at provincial or national export totals, the RCTP focuses specifically on where export-generating activity occurs. It identifies the proportion of export value that comes from “rural and small-town areas” versus urban centres across industries such as agriculture, forestry, mining, energy, manufacturing, and construction.

These profiles help quantify the contribution rural regions make to export wealth. For Saskatchewan and other resource-producing provinces, the profiles are especially valuable because they demonstrate that rural regions are essential contributors to national export performance and economic prosperity, not simply supporting players in a larger urban economy.

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2024010-eng.htm>

² Areas outside of census metropolitan area (CMAs) and census agglomerations (CAs) are classified as part of “rural and small town areas”, while those inside CMAs or CAs are classified as part of “functional urban areas”.

B. Key Findings

In 2023, rural and small town areas in Saskatchewan’s are home to 755 exporting and 1,485 importing businesses. These establishments represent nearly half (48%) of all exporters in the province, and 32% of importers.

B.1 Value of Goods Exports

Since 2012, rural and small town area exports have fluctuated as high as 53% of the province’s value of goods exported. Saskatchewan’s rural economy is much more exposed to export activity than the Canadian average, but also more sensitive to cyclical or sector-specific swings. The pattern is likely reflective of a concentration in a few export-heavy industries, commodity price movements, or changes in trade volumes.

Figure 1



Observations:

- From 2012 to 2016, Saskatchewan shows a strong upward surge, climbing from the mid-teens to just above 50%. The rise typically signals a period of unusually strong export activity in rural areas, likely tied to a concentrated set of industries or favorable market conditions.

- The 2017 drop is the most important turning point. It looks less like a gradual cooling and more like a sharp reset after the mid-decade peak, which implies the earlier strength was not sustained. After that, Saskatchewan settles into a lower band, generally around the mid-to-high teens, with only modest fluctuations.
- Canada, by contrast, is relatively flat throughout the whole period, hovering around 11% to 14%. That steadiness makes the Saskatchewan line stand out even more and suggests the province was much more exposed to export swings than the country.

Saskatchewan experienced a mid-decade export boom in rural and small-town areas, followed by a sharp correction and partial stabilization, while Canada remained comparatively stable throughout.

B.2 Value of Goods Imports

Imports are much more stable compared to exports for Saskatchewan’s rural and small town areas.

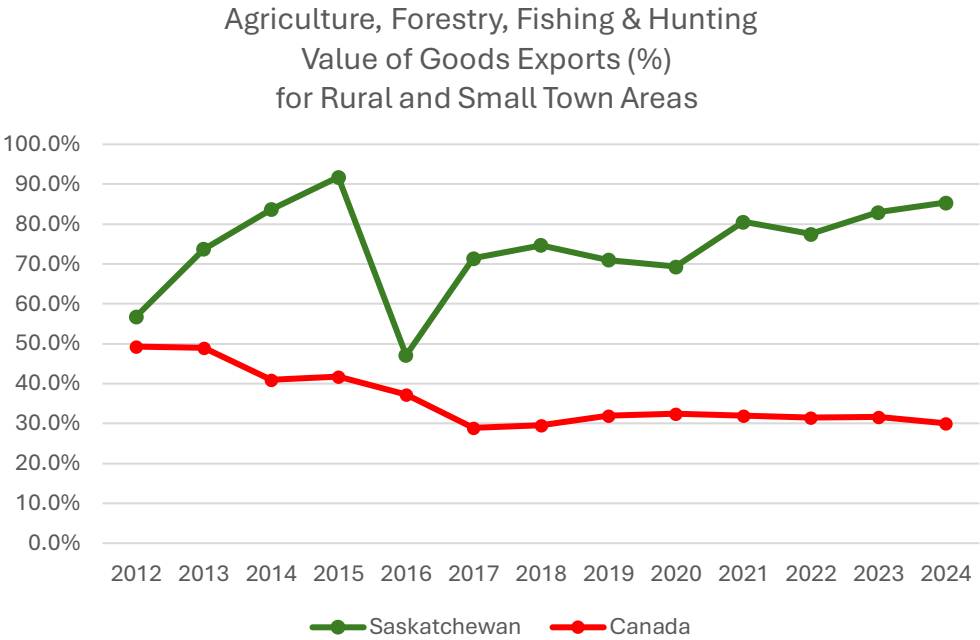
Figure 2



B.3 Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fishing Value of Goods Exports

The agriculture-related graph shows that Saskatchewan’s exports are overwhelmingly rural-based, with rural and small-town areas consistently accounting for the majority of export value throughout the 2012–2024 period. Saskatchewan’s rural share remains substantially higher than the Canadian average every year, often by 40 to 50 percentage points.

Figure 3



The data suggests that Saskatchewan’s export economy is deeply tied to rural agricultural production. While there is a notable dip around 2016, the province rebounds quickly and returns to very high rural export concentrations by 2021–2024. In contrast, the Canadian trend is much flatter and lower overall, indicating that nationally, agricultural exports are more distributed between urban and rural regions. The graph reinforces how central rural Saskatchewan is to the province’s export identity and international trade performance.

B.4 Manufacturing Value of Goods Exports

The chart below highlights the significantly larger role that rural and small-town areas play in Saskatchewan’s manufacturing exports compared to the national average. Across the entire 2012–2024 period, Saskatchewan consistently outperforms Canada in the proportion of manufacturing export value generated from rural and small-town regions.

Figure 4



Observations:

- Saskatchewan’s rural and small-town manufacturing sector contributes a much larger share of export value, generally ranging between 15% and 40%, while the Canadian average remains relatively stable around 10%–12%.
- The province experienced particularly strong rural export performance between 2015 and 2019, peaking at approximately 40% in 2016. This suggests that rural manufacturing industries were especially competitive and export-oriented during that period.
- Although Saskatchewan saw noticeable fluctuations after 2019, including declines in 2020 and 2023, the province still remained well above the national average in every year measured.
- The sharp rebound in 2022, reaching roughly 36%, demonstrates the resilience and continuing importance of Saskatchewan’s rural manufacturing base despite broader economic disruptions in previous years.

- In contrast, Canada’s national trend is relatively flat and stable, indicating that rural and small-town manufacturing plays a more modest and less variable role in export generation nationally.

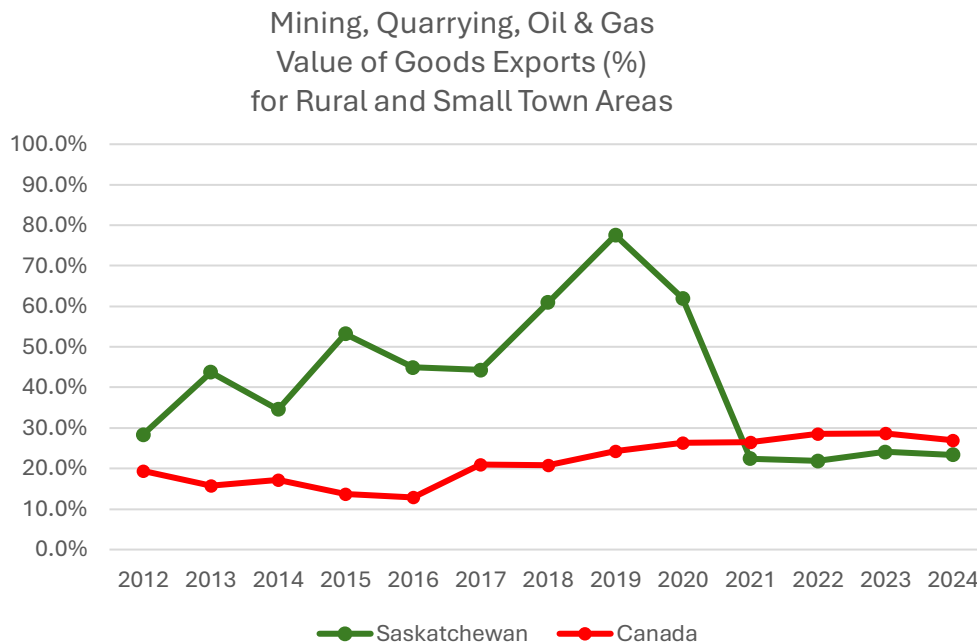
Overall, the data reinforces the importance of rural Saskatchewan as a major contributor to manufacturing exports. It suggests that smaller communities in the province are not only supporting local economies, but are also playing a disproportionately strong role in international trade and export activity compared to rural regions across Canada more broadly.

B.5 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil & Gas Extraction Value of Goods Exports

The mining and energy graph demonstrates a somewhat high level of volatility, reflecting the cyclical nature of commodity markets and resource extraction industries.

Saskatchewan’s rural share fluctuates significantly over the period, peaking near 80% in 2019 before dropping sharply after 2020.

Figure 5

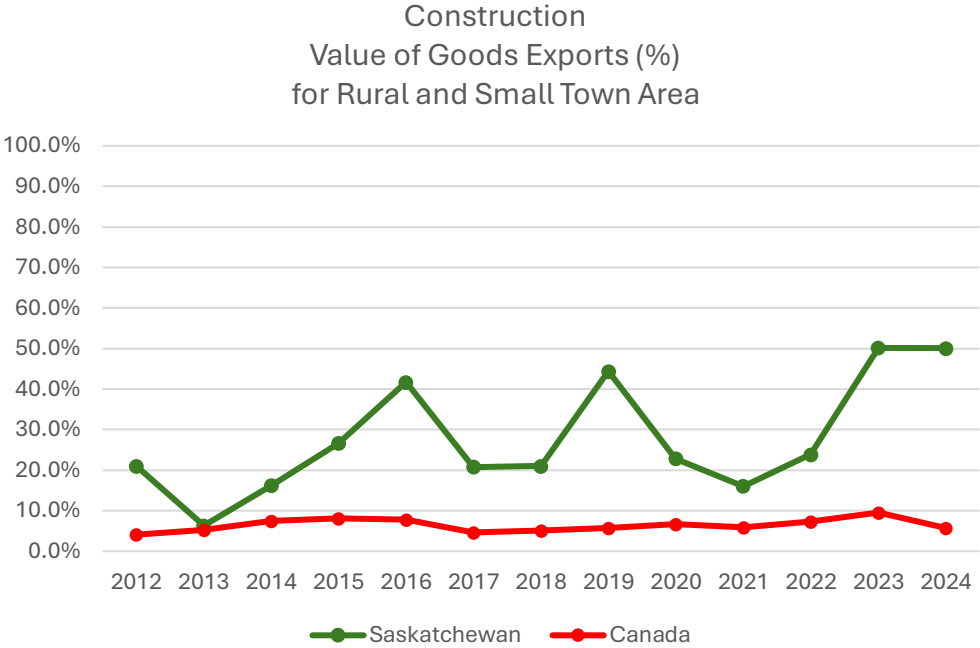


Despite this variability, Saskatchewan still exceeds the national average for most years, showing that resource exports in the province are heavily tied to rural and remote communities where extraction activity occurs. Canada’s rural share remains comparatively stable and much lower, suggesting a more diversified and urban-connected resource economy nationally.

B.6 Construction Value of Goods Exports

The construction graph shows a smaller overall export contribution compared to the previous industries, but Saskatchewan again records a much stronger rural presence than Canada. Rural and small-town Saskatchewan accounts for a sizable and growing share of construction-related export value, particularly after 2022 where the rural share rises to approximately 50%.

Figure 6



Although the construction sector experiences fluctuations over time, the overall trend suggests increasing rural economic participation in export-oriented construction activity, potentially tied to infrastructure, industrial development, or resource-sector expansion in non-urban regions. By comparison, Canada’s rural share remains consistently low and relatively unchanged, generally below 10%, highlighting how unique Saskatchewan’s rural economic structure is within the national context.

C. Summary

Collectively, the graphs above illustrate that Saskatchewan's rural and small-town regions are not peripheral to the provincial economy. Rather, they are central drivers of export activity across multiple sectors. Agriculture remains the most consistently rural-based industry, followed by manufacturing, while mining, and oil and gas extraction, plus construction show stronger fluctuations tied to economic cycles and investment patterns.

Rural manufacturing in Saskatchewan is closely tied to the province's broader agricultural and resource economy, where production, processing, and distribution often occur near the source of raw materials. The consistently strong rural contribution indicates that manufacturing is not solely an urban economic driver in Saskatchewan. Instead, rural communities are playing a significant role in generating export value, supporting employment, strengthening supply chains, and contributing to the province's overall trade competitiveness.

The data highlights the unique structure of Saskatchewan's economy, where smaller communities are not only supporting local and regional prosperity, but are also playing a disproportionately strong role in international trade and export generation compared to rural regions across Canada more broadly. These findings reinforce the importance of rural infrastructure, workforce capacity, transportation networks, and community sustainability to the province's long-term economic competitiveness.

Compared to Canada overall, Saskatchewan demonstrates a far greater dependence on rural regions for export generation.

Facts and figures extrapolated from:

[Trade in Rural and Small Town Canada: Interactive Dashboard](#) (accessed: May 20, 2026)

Acknowledgement: Credit to Alexander Lavoie, Policy and Initiatives Manager, of Rural Manitoba Economic Development (RMED) Corp. for his providing his insights for Rural Manitoba. See: Lavoie, Alexander. "How Rural Manitoba Outpaces Rural Canada in Trade and Export Contributions." <https://rmedcorp.ca/how-rural-manitoba-outpaces-rural-canada-in-trade-and-export-contributions/>

Document compiled by: Elan Buan, Schollie Research & Consulting. May 2026.