

PPI Program Spotlight

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics



Producer Price Index Data Via the Internet

In 1995, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) began posting producer price index (PPI) series, news releases, and technical information to both a World Wide Web (WWW) site and a file transfer protocol (FTP) site. During the years following the introduction of PPI Internet services, usage of these sites eclipsed that of more traditional methods of data dissemination such as subscriptions to the *PPI Detailed Report*. For example, there have been approximately 1.1 million electronic accesses of PPI series during the 12 months ended July 31, 2001.

Retrieving PPI data from the PPI Web site

PPI data can be obtained from the PPI homepage by entering the WWW address (<http://www.bls.gov/ppi>). Scrolling down the page to the "Get Detailed Statistics" header reveals the following five methods of data retrieval.

- **Most Requested Series** is a form-based application that allows the user to quickly obtain PPI time series data by selecting from two separate lists (commodity and industry) of the most commonly requested time series, including "all commodities" and the stage-of-processing indexes (for example, finished goods). Within each list, any one or all of the time series shown can be selected. The user can choose data ranges and output options after executing the query using the reformat button above the data output table.
- **Create Customized Tables** is a form-based query application designed for users unfamiliar with the PPI coding structure. It guides the user through the PPI classification system by listing index titles and does not require knowledge of commodity or industry (SIC-based) codes. Data retrieved are based on a query formulated by selecting data characteristics from lists provided. Two options are available to create customized tables, depending on the user's browser capability. The one screen option is a JavaScript application that utilizes a single screen to guide

the user through the available time series data. The second option is the multiple screen, nonJava-based application. Both methods allow the user to browse the PPI coding structure and select multiple series codes. The user can choose data ranges and output options after executing the query using the reformat button above the data output table.

- **Series Report** is a form-based application that uses PPI time series identifiers (commodity or SIC codes) as input in extracting data according to a specified set of date ranges and output options. This application provides the most efficient path for those users who are familiar with the format of PPI time series identifiers. Up to 300 indexes can be extracted at one time.

For PPI data, there are two basic formats to identify specific time series. For commodity codes and stage-of-processing codes, enter a "wpu" prefix (not seasonally adjusted) or a "wps" prefix (seasonally adjusted). For industry product codes, enter a "pcu" prefix and a "#" between the fourth and fifth characters of the product code. *In both cases, no spaces are required.*

Example:

Commodity code wps063	Will provide data for: Drugs and pharmaceuticals, seasonally adjusted
wpusop3000	Finished goods, not seasonally adjusted
Product code pcu28__#	Will provide data for: Chemicals and allied products, not seasonally adjusted
pcu3711#111	Passenger cars

Note that the first product code uses two underscores as placeholders to complete the reference to a two-digit product code time series.

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Spotlight

- **Flat files** and the FTP server are best suited for those users requiring access to either a large volume of time series data or other PPI-related documentation (such as seasonal factor and relative importance tables). For increased efficiency, it is suggested that users download files without opening, if their Internet browser permits. The FTP site can be accessed at (<ftp://ftp.bls.gov>) or directly from the links on the “Get Detailed Statistics” page or the PPI homepage.

Data and documentation available for download include:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | Directory: |
| • SIC Current Series | /pub/time.series/pc |
| • SIC Discontinued Series | /pub/time.series/pd |
| • Commodity Series | /pub/time.series/wp |
| • Special Requests | /pub/special.requests/ppi |
| • Latest News Release | /pub/news.release/ppi.txt |

The FTP site maintains files to help with searches and downloads. These files are centrally located in the [/pub/doc](#) directory. Within this directory, go to the [overview.txt](#) file for an overview relating to all BLS data available through the FTP site. For *commodity-based PPI data* (which appear in tables 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 of the PPI monthly detailed report), the program help file is [wp.txt](#). For *industry-based PPI data* (which appear in tables 4, 5, 9, 10, and 11 of the monthly PPI report), the file is [pc.txt](#). For industry-based time series that have been discontinued, go to [pd.txt](#). (These and other help files also are maintained within each of the five directories listed above.)

Other Sources of PPI Data

PPI data can also be accessed via the BLS homepage (<http://www.bls.gov>). After clicking the “Get Detailed Statistics” link at the top of the homepage, the user may view a chart that lists all of the available BLS programs. The following four methods are available for PPI data: Most requested series, create customized tables (one screen or multiple screens), and flat files. Additional sources of BLS data also are accessible from this page including: Economic news releases, series report, and economy at a glance.

Additional information

The PPI homepage (<http://www.bls.gov/ppi/>) contains additional information regarding PPI data and methodology. The top section of the homepage provides PPI news releases, both current and archived, as well as general PPI information. The “Tables Created by BLS” section found beneath the statistics section provides relative importance and seasonal factor tables. The remaining sections offer special notices and publications pertaining to PPI methodology and applications.

For questions or comments regarding PPI data classification, methodology, or data availability on the Internet, call or e-mail the Section of Index Analysis and Public Information directly at (202) 691-7705 or ppi-info@bls.gov. Data also can be obtained by calling the national Fax-on-Demand service at (202) 691-6325; this service enables customers to request faxes of BLS data 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.