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## RURAL RESEARCH NOTE

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### Rural unemployment rates by gender

#### Highlights

- In 2005, the average unemployment rate for young rural women was 10.9 percent compared to 13.7 percent for young rural men.
- The average unemployment rate for adult rural women was 6.6 percent, 0.3 percentage point lower than their male counterparts.
- From 1996 to 2005, urban and rural female unemployment rates decreased at a faster pace than male rates.
- Monthly unemployment rates for rural men fluctuate significantly more than for those of rural women.

An earlier Rural Research Note (RRN) provided some basic information on youth unemployment rates in rural Canada, looking at differences and commonalities among provinces and trends over a ten-year period. This note looks more specifically at the differences and similarities in the unemployment rates of men and women in both rural and urban areas. It uses Labour Force Survey estimates for the years 1996 to 2005. Youth in this research note are defined as being the population aged 15 years to 24 years old and adults are those 25 years of age and older.

Rural issues have an increasing profile in Canada's policy debate. Examining variations in employment of people living in rural Canada is an important indicator of economic circumstance and for determining resource allocations.

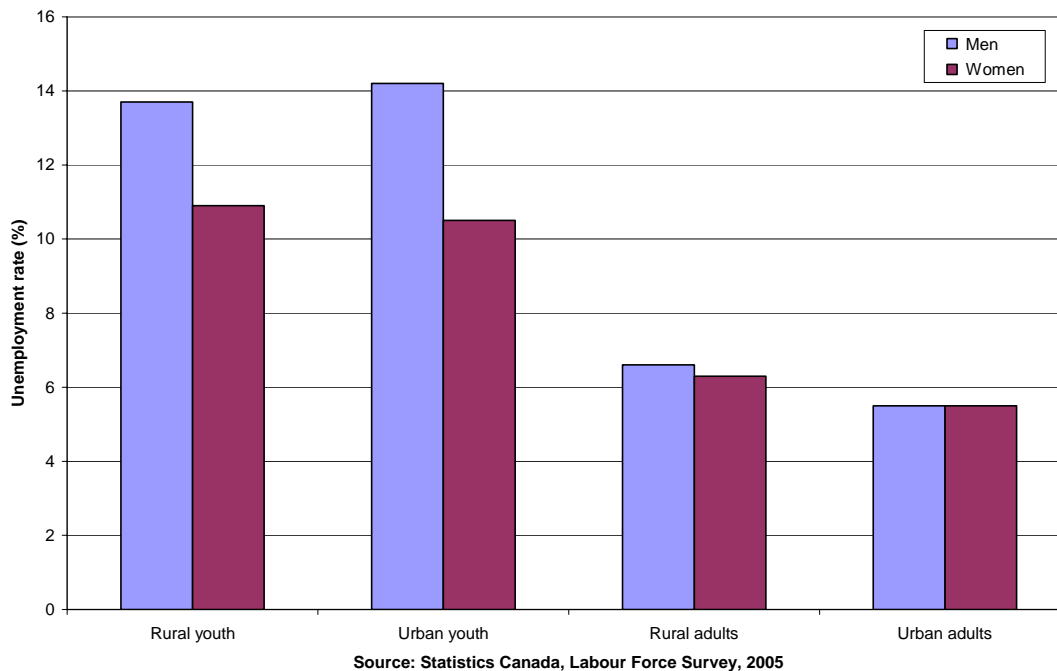
## 2005 overview

In 2005, there was a monthly average of 730,700 Canadians aged 15 to 24 years living in rural areas<sup>1</sup> and an average of 483,400 were active in the labour market. Young men represented 55 percent of the rural youth labour force (267,200 young men compared to 216,200 young women).

The average unemployment rate for rural youth in 2005 was 12.5 percent, compared to 12.3 percent for urban youth. When breaking down the data by gender, we can see that young women have lower unemployment rates than young men in both rural and urban settings (Figure1).

In 2005, the average unemployment rate for young rural men was 2.8 percentage points higher than for young rural women. The difference is greater in urban settings with a 3.7 percentage point difference in favour of young urban women (Figure1). Interestingly, adult men and women in urban areas had the same average annual unemployment rate of 5.5 percent, in 2005.

**Figure 1. Average annual unemployment rate by gender, 2005**



<sup>1</sup> Rural areas can be defined in a few different ways. In this note, the Rural and Small Town Canada definition of rural is used (Box 1).

Rural women 15 to 24 years of age had an average unemployment rate of 10.9 percent, only 0.4 percentage points higher than their urban counterparts. Similarly, the unemployment rate for adult women in rural communities was 0.8 percentage points higher than urban women.

Conversely, young rural men had an average unemployment rate of 13.7 percent, 1.5 percentage points lower than young urban men. This is the only instance where a rural age and gender group has lower rates than its urban counterpart. Rural adult men on the other hand had a rate of 6.6 percent, 1.1 percentage points higher than their urban counterparts. It should be noted that when looking specifically at male and female youth unemployment rates in rural areas, women generally had lower labour force participation rates than men did (see Appendix Table 1) and, if employed, had a lower share of full time employment.<sup>2</sup>

Adult women and men have similar rates to each other in both rural and urban areas. Rural men had an unemployment rate that was only 0.3 percentage points higher than that of women.

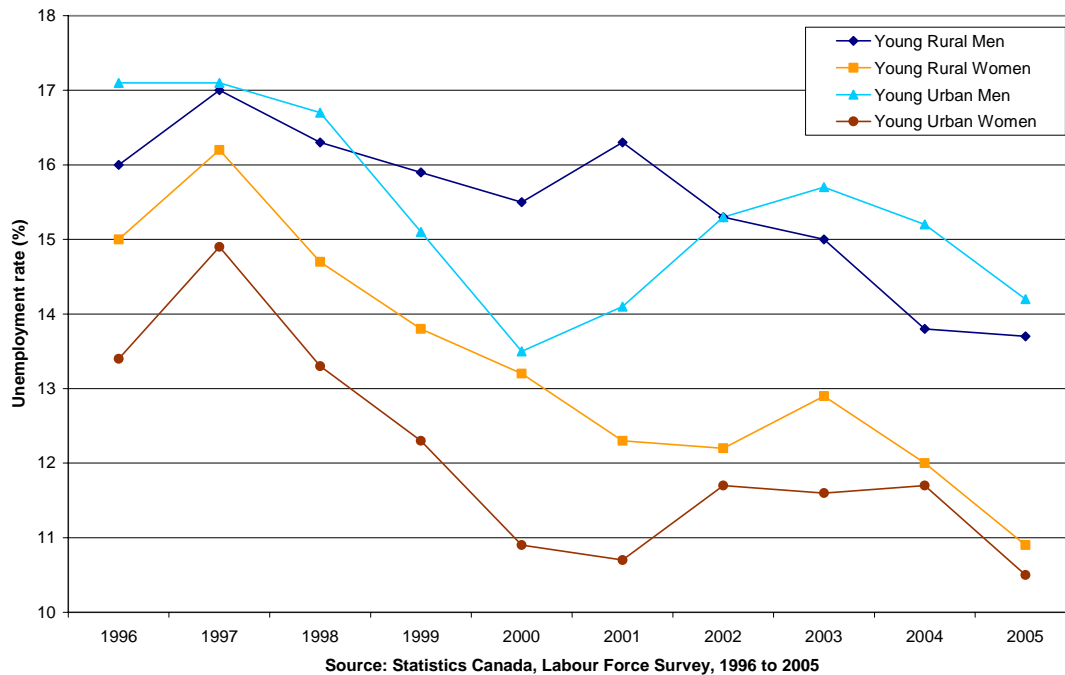
### **Ten-year overview (1996 to 2005)**

Figure 2 shows the average annual male and female youth unemployment rates in both rural and urban settings for the period 1996 to 2005. Over this ten year period, female youth both rural and urban enjoyed lower unemployment rates than that of male youth. As well, we can see that rural and urban women had a similar pattern in their rates, while the unemployment rate pattern for male youth was different between rural and urban areas. Unemployment rates for young rural women were always higher than their urban counterparts; however, urban young men had higher rates than rural young men from the period 1996 to 1998, as well as from 2003 to 2005.

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<sup>2</sup> Care should be taken when interpreting the results of this note. While patterns of unemployment are examined, no detailed account has been taken about labour force participation and especially about employment rates in both the full-time and part-time categories of employment. In December 2005 for example, there were more young rural men employed full-time than young rural women; 53.3 percent of young rural women occupied a part time job while only 29.7 percent of the young rural men occupied a part time job. This will be reported in a future publication.

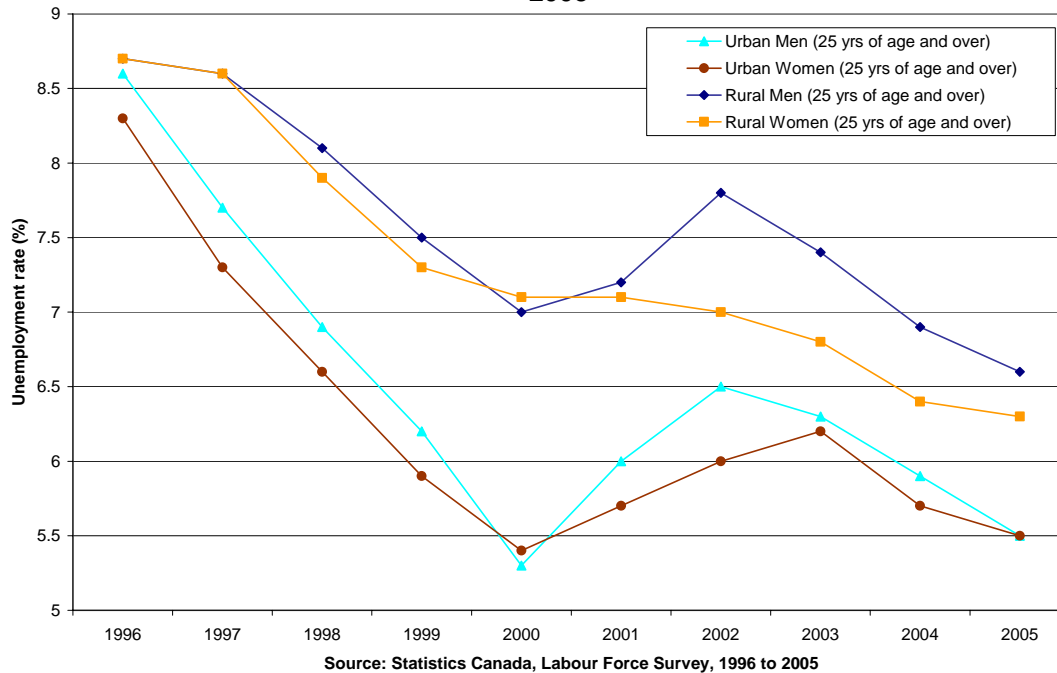
**Figure 2. Average annual youth unemployment rate, from 1996 to 2005**



Over this ten year period, the unemployment rate for young rural men decreased more slowly (and with greater variability) than the unemployment rate for young rural women.

In Figure 3, we can see that adult unemployment rates are lower than youth unemployment rates and tend to be less variable over time. The gender gap between adult unemployment rates is significantly smaller than between youth rates. Unemployment rate patterns for men and women were similar over the ten year period, especially in urban areas, except in 2002 where the gap widened. It appears that geography (rural versus urban) has a greater influence on adult unemployment rates than gender does.

**Figure 3. Average annual adult unemployment rates, from 1996 to 2005**



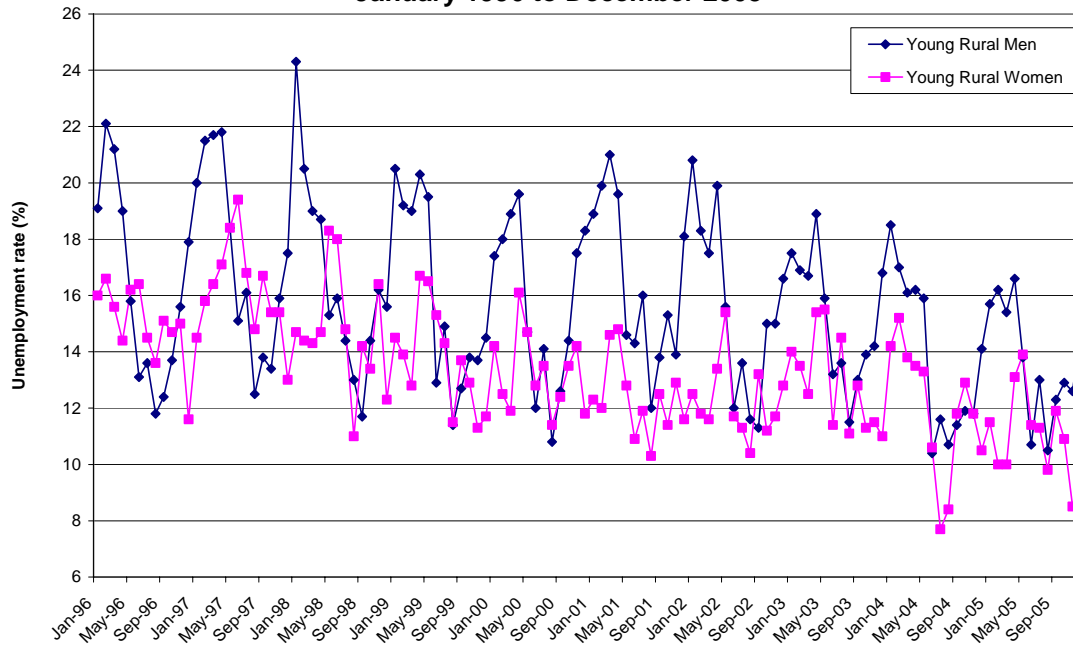
Over the ten year period, unemployment rates in rural areas have generally been higher than rates in urban areas, except for unemployment rates for urban male youth which exceeded unemployment for rural male youth after 2002. Also, with the exception of the year 2000, urban adult females had lower unemployment rates than all age categories in both rural and urban areas<sup>3</sup>.

### Seasonal variation of unemployment rates

As seen above, young rural men generally experience higher unemployment rates than young rural women and when looking at Figure 4, we can see that young rural men experience much more seasonality in their work than young rural women.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the scale of the axis reading "unemployment rate (%)" in Figure 2 is different than that of Figure 3. A direct comparison of both graphics should be done with care.

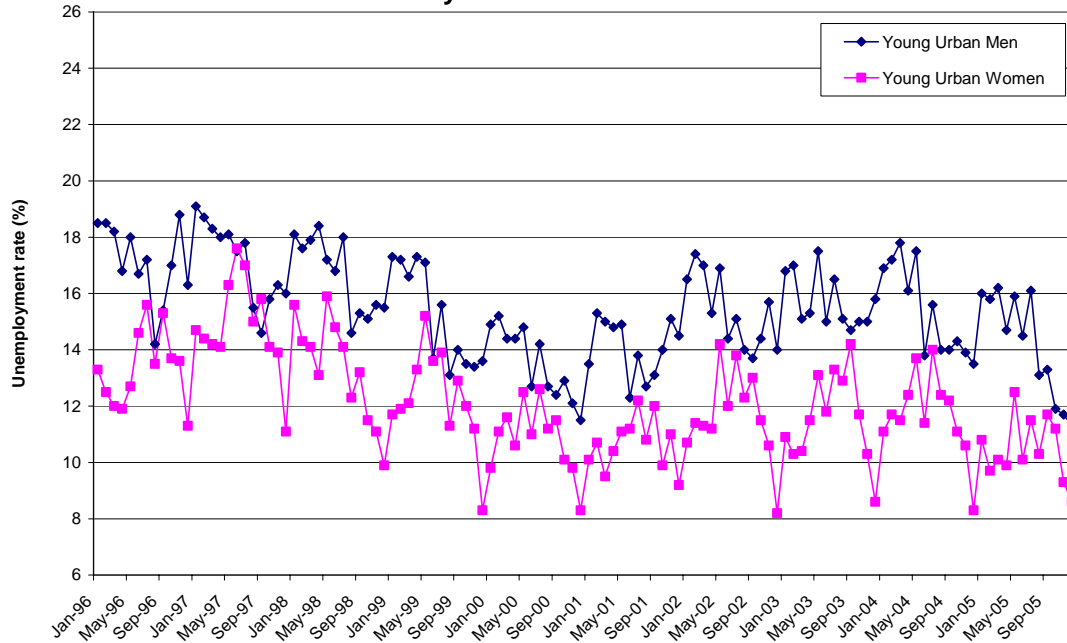
**Figure 4. Rural youth unemployment rates by gender, monthly from January 1996 to December 2005**



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January 1996 to December 2005

Young women appear to experience higher unemployment in the spring months (mostly in April and May) and young men tend to have higher rates over the winter months (Figure 4).

**Figure 5. Urban youth unemployment rates by gender, monthly from January 1996 to December 2005**

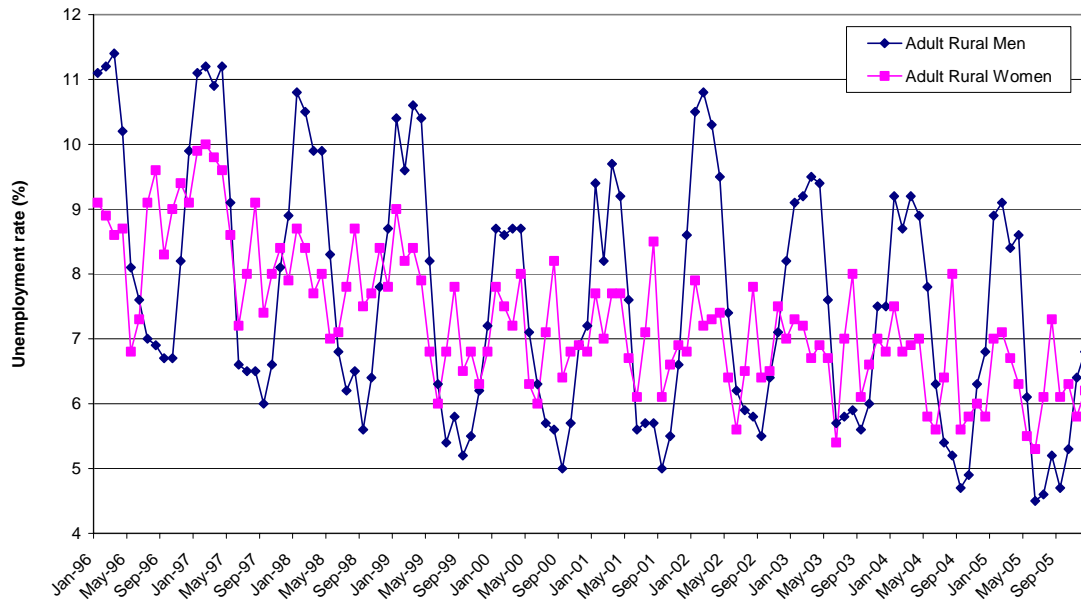


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January 1996 to December 2005

Rural unemployment rates have more seasonality than urban unemployment rates, for both the youth and the adult workforce of both genders. Rural youth unemployment rates are generally lower in the summer months and urban youth unemployment rates are generally at their highest during these particular months (Figure 5).

Over this ten-year period (January 1996 to December 2005), unemployment rates for both young men and young women generally decreased. Young rural men experienced higher variability in their monthly rates than that of young rural women.

**Figure 6. Rural adult unemployment rates by gender, monthly from January 1996 to December 2005**

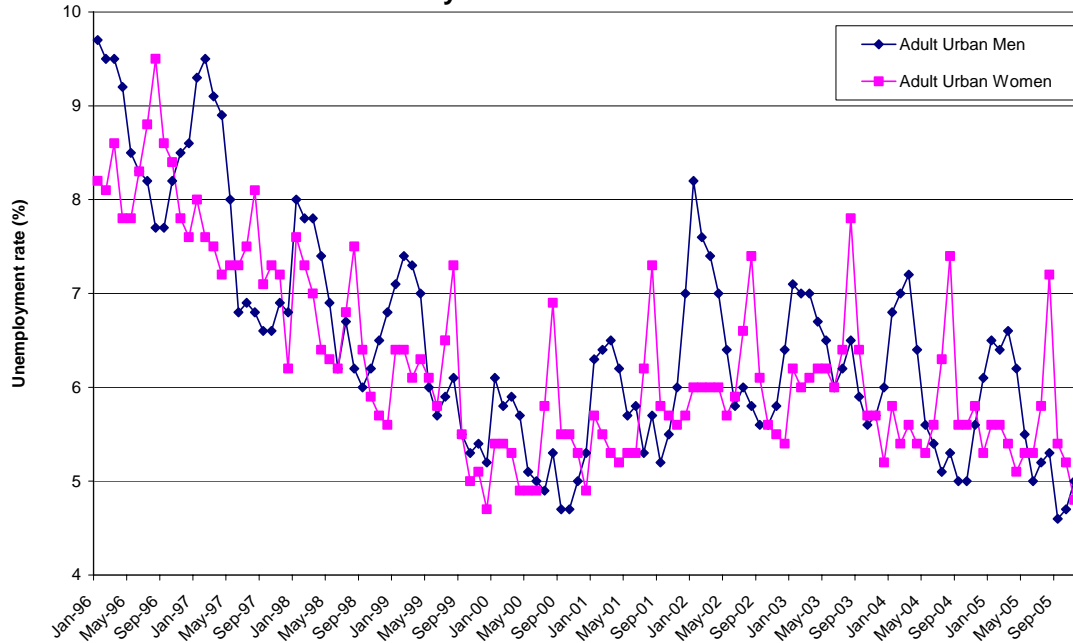


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January 1996 to December 2005

Figure 6 examines rural adult unemployment rates by gender. Once again, male unemployment rates were generally higher and more variable than that of rural adult women. Although rural adult rates tend to be more stable than that of rural youth rates, unemployment is still seasonally variable.



**Figure 7. Urban adult unemployment rates by gender, monthly from January 1996 to December 2005**



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January 1996 to December 2005

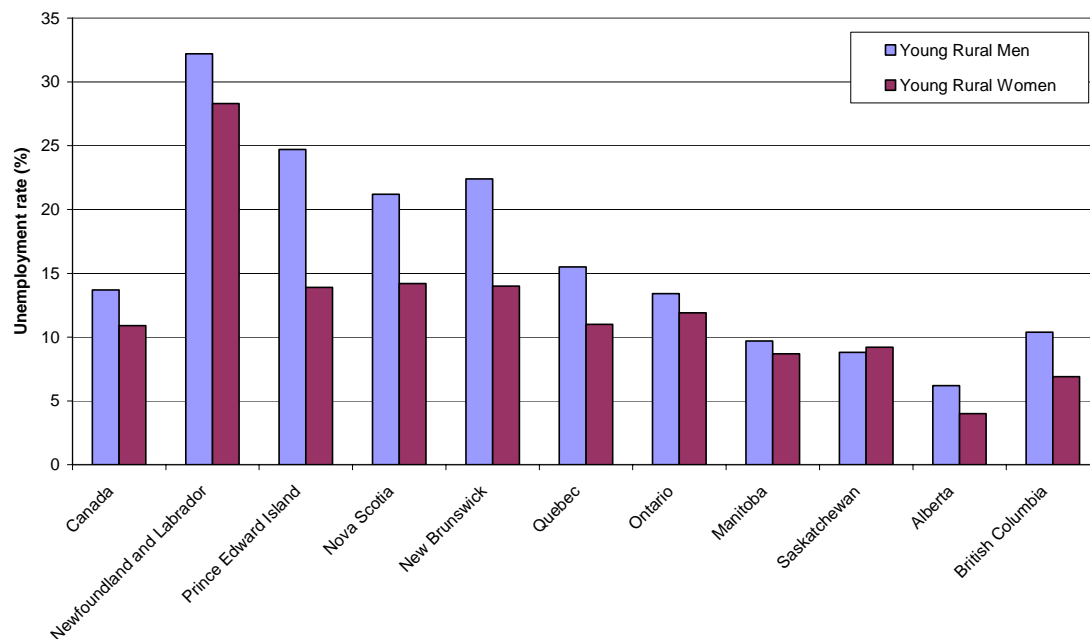
During the period of January 1996 to December 2005, urban adult unemployment rates were the most stable rates observed in this research (Figure 7). Urban women had generally higher rates in August of each year while urban men generally had higher rates in January and February of each year.

## 2005 Provincial overview

When looking at the provincial breakdowns of the average unemployment rates for 2005 (Figure 8), we can see that rates for young rural women are lower than those of young rural men with the exception of Saskatchewan (a 0.4 percentage point difference).

As well, the largest gap in unemployment rates between young rural men and young rural women was in Prince Edward Island (10.8 percentage points). Alberta had the lowest average rates for both young rural men (6.2 percent) and young rural women (4 percent).

**Figure 8. Rural youth unemployment rates by gender, 2005**

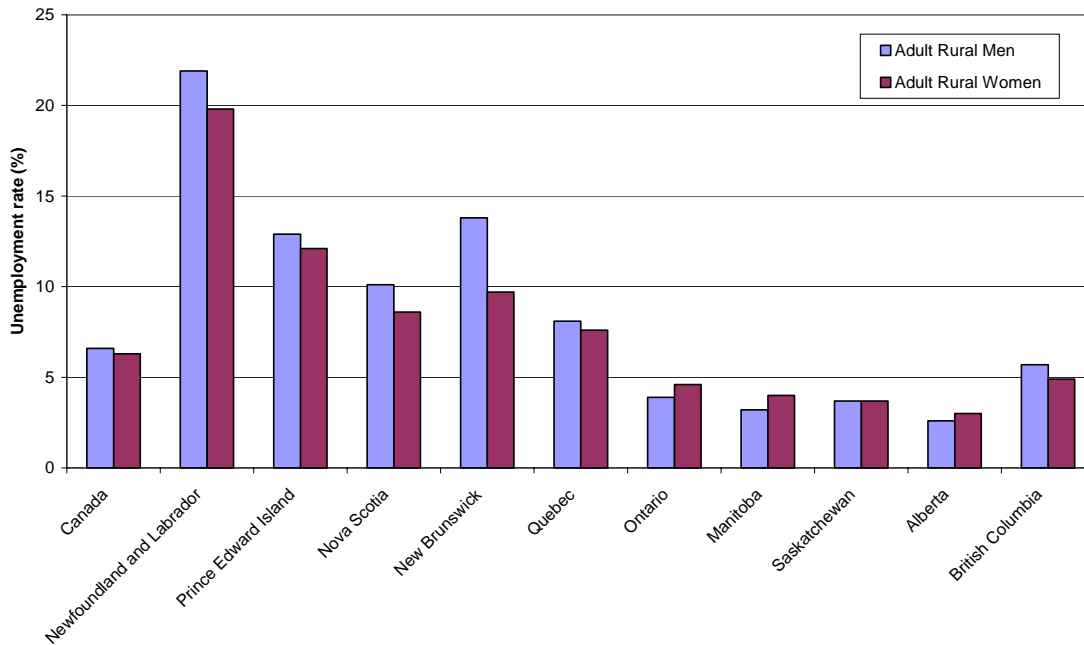


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2005

When looking at the yearly unemployment rates by province for rural youth from 1996 to 2005 (Appendix Table 2) we can see that young rural women generally experienced lower unemployment rates than young rural men. It is worthwhile to note that young rural women and young rural men in Manitoba had the most stable rates amongst all Provinces.

The Appendix Table 2 also shows that: Quebec and New Brunswick had similar variability in their declining rates; Alberta had the lowest rates since 2004 for both genders, and; the Atlantic Provinces in general had higher rates and were more variable.

**Figure 9. Rural adult unemployment rates by gender, 2005**



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2005

Figure 9 highlights rural adult unemployment rates for 2005. Similarly to youth, adult men had higher rates than adult women in rural British Columbia, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. However, rural women had higher rates in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta. Both adult men and women had an average rate of 3.7 percent in Saskatchewan in 2005 (see Appendix Table 3).

## Conclusion

This research note has examined the evolving unemployment rates in rural Canada and the Provinces for the period 1996 to 2005 for both males and females. Five broad messages are underlined:

- rates of unemployment are much higher in rural than in urban Canada;
- youth unemployment rates are much higher than adult rates in both rural and urban areas;
- women in both rural and urban areas generally had lower unemployment rates than men;
- male youth and adults in rural Canada have the most seasonal variability in unemployment rates, and;
- overall unemployment rates declined in Canada between 1996 and 2005 and this decline was most significant for women.

Rural areas of Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces had higher unemployment rates than the Canadian rural average. In 2005 young rural women had lower unemployment rates than young men in all provinces except Saskatchewan. Adult rural women had lower unemployment rates than men except in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta.

These results suggest that gender is still a differentiating factor with regard to unemployment in rural Canada.

## BOX 1. Definitions

### *Rural and urban definitions*

Rural areas refer to the population residing outside Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and Census Agglomerations (CAs). A CMA has an urban core of 100,000 or more and a CA has an urban core of 10,000 to 99,999. CMAs and CAs include all neighbouring municipalities where 50 percent or more of the workforce commutes into the urban core. Thus, rural areas represent the non-CMA and non-CA population.

Urban areas refer to the population residing in CMAs and CAs.

This data series uses constant 1996 boundaries.

### *Labour and employment definitions*

Employed refers to those who, during the reference week of the survey, worked for pay or profit, or performed unpaid family work or who had a job but were not at work due to own illness or disability, personal or family responsibilities, labour dispute, vacation, or other reason. Those on layoff and those without work but who had a job to start in the future are not considered employed.

Employment rate is the number of employed persons within the relevant age group and geography expressed as a percent of the total population (excluding any institutionalized individuals) within that age group and geography.

Unemployed refers to those who, during the reference week, were without work, had actively looked for work in the past four weeks, and were available for work. Those persons on layoff or who had a new job to start in four weeks or less are considered unemployed. Estimates in thousands, rounded to the nearest hundred.

Labour force refers to the number of civilian, non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age and over who, during the reference week, were employed or unemployed. Estimates in thousands, rounded to the nearest hundred.

The participation rate is the number of labour force participants expressed as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over. The participation rate for a particular group (age, sex, marital status) is the number of labour force participants in that group expressed as a percentage of the population for that group. Estimates are percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth.

Unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force. The unemployment rate for a particular group (age, sex, marital status) is the number unemployed in that group expressed as a percentage of the labour force for that group. Estimates are percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth.

Part-time employment consists of persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week at their main or only job.

Full-time employment consists of persons who usually work 30 hours or more per week at their main or only job.

### *Labour Force Survey background*

The LFS covers the civilian, non-institutionalized population 15 years of age and over. Excluded from the survey's coverage are residents of the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, persons living on Indian Reserves, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces and inmates of institutions. These groups together represent an exclusion of less than 2% of the population aged 15 and over. More details about the survey population can be found in the Guide to the Labour Force Survey, section 4.1- Population coverage. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/3701.htm>

Since July 1995, the monthly LFS sample size has been approximately 54,000 households, resulting in the collection of labour market information for approximately 100,000 individuals. It should be noted that the LFS sample size is subject to change from time to time in order to meet data quality or budget requirements.

Note: The data is based on the location of the individual's residence, not on the location of the individual's place of employment.

**Appendix Table 1. Average Participation Rates, Rural Youth  
by Gender, 2005\***

<b>2005</b>	<b>Both Sexes</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>January</b>	60.8	64.6	56.2
<b>February</b>	61.0	65.2	56.1
<b>March</b>	60.4	64.1	56.0
<b>April</b>	62.2	65.2	58.9
<b>May</b>	69.3	71.6	66.7
<b>June</b>	72.2	74.4	69.8
<b>July</b>	80.3	83.0	77.3
<b>August</b>	76.2	79.3	72.7
<b>September</b>	63.9	66.2	61.4
<b>October</b>	62.6	65.7	58.9
<b>November</b>	63.0	65.0	60.7
<b>December</b>	61.2	63.2	59.0

*Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2005*

*\* This data series uses constant 1996 boundaries*

**Appendix Table 2. Average Annual Rural Youth  
Unemployment Rates, from 1996 to 2005\***

	Sex	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Newfoundland and Labrador	Women	30.8	36.9	37.3	29.2	33.3	26.7	31.3	28.1	27.8	28.3
	Men	38.8	36.1	36.4	37.8	41.0	35.6	35.9	33.7	34.5	32.2
Prince Edward Island	Women	19.0	21.7	17.4	20.8	17.4	17.4	23.1	16.7	17.5	13.9
	Men	21.4	25.0	26.1	29.2	21.4	24.0	20.7	17.2	25.4	24.7
Nova Scotia	Women	17.2	23.6	17.8	16.4	13.1	16.5	16.8	15.8	13.5	14.2
	Men	20.6	22.9	24.6	18.9	21.1	20.1	23.3	22.7	16.9	21.2
New Brunswick	Women	16.1	21.4	18.9	17.2	15.9	14.7	14.2	16.0	15.5	14.0
	Men	24.6	23.5	22.6	21.7	21.5	25.0	26.2	23.5	22.2	22.4
Quebec	Women	18.1	20.6	17.1	16.5	15.7	14.2	12.2	13.4	12.8	11.0
	Men	17.4	20.1	18.7	18.7	15.3	16.3	16.3	15.8	15.2	15.5
Ontario	Women	14.6	17.0	13.8	10.8	11.1	11.2	11.4	13.2	11.7	11.9
	Men	16.5	17.2	14.1	13.4	14.3	15.4	12.5	12.5	11.7	13.4
Manitoba	Women	9.8	8.1	9.2	7.5	6.7	9.3	8.8	8.2	8.7	8.7
	Men	9.1	9.5	9.5	10.9	7.5	10.6	9.7	10.2	10.2	9.7
Saskatchewan	Women	10.0	7.2	10.3	8.4	8.5	8.0	8.7	7.3	10.2	9.2
	Men	9.5	9.1	10.2	11.5	12.7	12.6	10.8	10.9	9.9	8.8
Alberta	Women	8.4	7.8	8.9	12.0	10.0	7.2	8.7	10.2	7.1	4.0
	Men	8.7	8.3	11.2	11.0	11.6	9.0	11.1	8.7	7.7	6.2
British Columbia	Women	14.5	10.8	13.6	18.7	18.3	12.4	12.6	12.7	10.2	6.9
	Men	15.0	17.3	18.0	16.7	18.1	20.7	16.8	21.6	17.7	10.4
Canada	Women	15.0	16.2	14.7	13.8	13.2	12.3	12.2	12.9	12.0	10.9
	Men	16.0	17.0	16.3	15.9	15.5	16.3	15.3	15.0	13.8	13.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1996 to 2005

\*This data series uses constant 1996 boundaries

**Appendix Table 3. Monthly Rural Adult (25 years of age and over)  
unemployment rates, 2005**

2005	Sex	Canada	Newfoundland and Labrador	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia
Jan	Men	8.9	27.3	18.2	11.0	19.9	11.8	5.3	5.3	6.7	3.4	6.7
	Women	7.0	20.4	15.1	8.7	9.7	9.1	5.0	3.8	3.9	3.6	6.1
Feb	Men	9.1	26.5	15.8	15.0	18.6	12.3	5.0	5.1	6.5	2.8	9.6
	Women	7.1	24.0	15.9	9.3	8.8	8.8	4.7	3.0	3.5	3.6	8.6
Mar	Men	8.4	29.3	15.0	13.0	17.0	11.4	4.6	4.2	6.4	2.9	6.5
	Women	6.7	24.1	16.5	10.2	11.1	7.9	5.4	3.6	3.1	1.6	5.5
Apr	Men	8.6	29.0	21.6	13.3	18.8	11.1	4.5	4.6	4.9	3.7	6.1
	Women	6.3	24.8	18.3	8.8	10.7	6.7	3.3	3.6	3.6	2.8	7.7
May	Men	6.1	23.6	7.0	8.6	14.4	8.0	3.0	3.0	2.1	2.6	3.8
	Women	5.5	19.1	10.9	7.9	8.5	7.2	3.9	3.3	2.8	2.4	2.0
Jun	Men	4.5	12.5	5.6	8.2	9.7	6.0	2.4	2.3	1.8	1.8	3.4
	Women	5.3	15.2	5.9	6.5	9.4	6.9	4.0	3.7	2.0	2.5	2.6
Jul	Men	4.6	12.1	9.0	6.4	11.2	5.8	2.9	2.1	1.9	1.2	5.0
	Women	6.1	14.4	7.5	9.7	10.8	7.1	4.7	4.2	3.9	3.4	3.3
Aug	Men	5.2	18.0	8.4	7.0	9.7	6.2	3.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	5.0
	Women	7.3	19.9	8.8	8.9	11.2	6.8	6.7	7.6	4.8	5.1	5.5
Sep	Men	4.7	17.4	8.8	8.3	8.2	5.4	3.0	2.1	2.4	1.5	4.2
	Women	6.1	15.8	7.4	8.6	9.4	7.7	4.4	3.8	5.4	2.9	4.7
Oct	Men	5.3	19.9	9.1	7.6	11.6	5.5	3.3	2.3	2.1	2.8	5.6
	Women	6.3	19.0	10.9	8.4	9.1	7.9	4.4	4.6	3.9	3.3	4.0
Nov	Men	6.4	22.8	16.4	12.6	12.4	6.7	4.1	2.2	3.9	2.7	6.1
	Women	5.8	19.3	13.1	8.3	7.8	7.1	4.1	3.9	4.0	2.9	4.2
Dec	Men	6.8	24.9	19.4	10.5	13.6	7.1	4.9	3.3	3.5	3.0	5.9
	Women	6.2	21.9	14.9	8.4	10.1	7.8	4.1	2.6	3.5	2.3	4.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2005

\* This data series uses constant 1996 boundaries



### **Rural Research Notes**

This Rural Research Note was written by Carl Sauriol, Rural Secretariat.

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