

[Related BLS programs](#) | [Related articles](#)**ABSTRACT**[February 1997, Vol. 120, No. 2](#)

U.S. and foreign productivity and unit labor costs

Christopher Sparks and Mary Greiner

Economists, Division of Foreign Labor Statistics, Office of Productivity and Technology, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Between 1979 and 1995, output per hour in U.S. manufacturing grew at a slower rate than in several other countries, but modest growth in hourly compensation helped the United States to restrain growth in unit labor costs relative to its foreign competitors. This article examines comparative trends in manufacturing productivity (output per hour) and unit labor costs in 1995, the most recent year for which comparative data are available, and for the 1979-95 period. The analysis covers the United States, Canada, Japan, Belgium, France, Germany (the former West Germany), Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

▶ [Read excerpt](#) ▶ [Download full text in PDF](#) (120K)

Related BLS programs[Foreign Labor Statistics](#)[Industry Productivity](#)**Related Monthly Labor Review articles**

Manufacturing multifactor productivity in three countries. July 1995.

Manufacturing prices, productivity, and labor costs in five economies. July 1995.

Measurement of productivity growth in U.S. manufacturing. July 1995.

Comparative manufacturing productivity and unit labor costs. February 1995.

Manufacturing costs, productivity, and competitiveness: 1979-93. October 1994.

Manufacturing productivity and labor costs in 14 economies. December 1991.

Within *Monthly Labor Review Online*:

[Welcome](#) | [Current Issue](#) | [Index](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Archives](#)Exit *Monthly Labor Review Online*:[BLS Home](#) | [Publications & Research Papers](#)