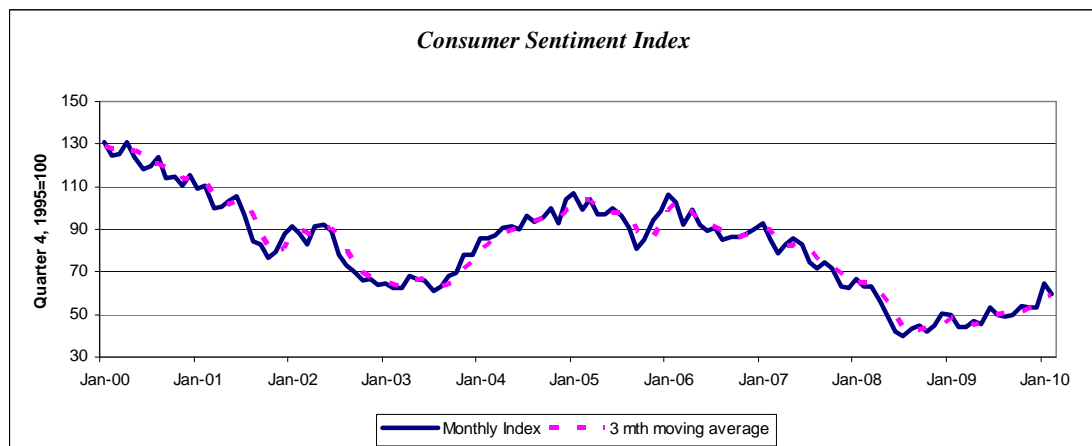




CONSUMER SENTIMENT INDEX, FEBRUARY 2010

Consumer Sentiment moderates in February

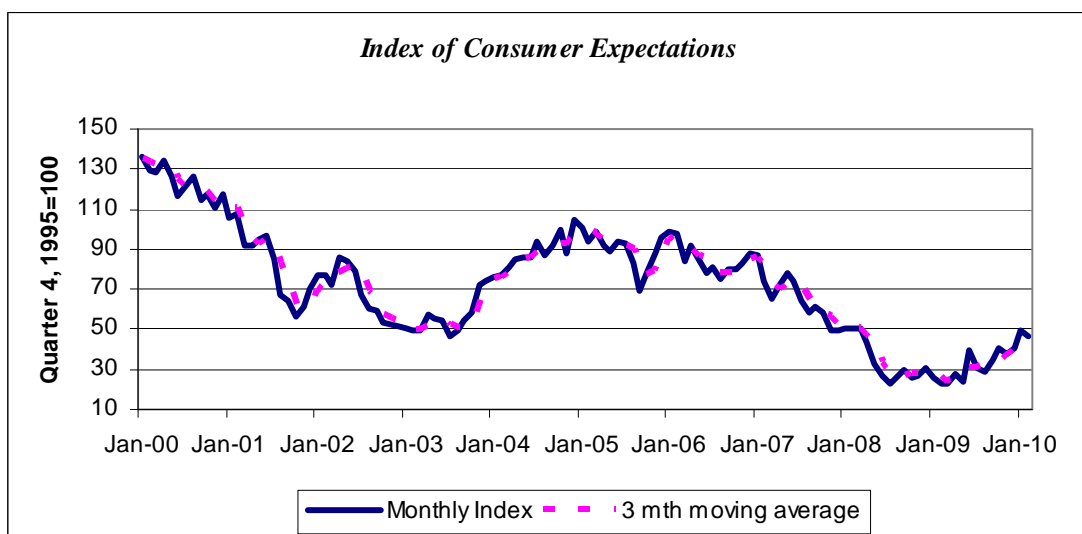
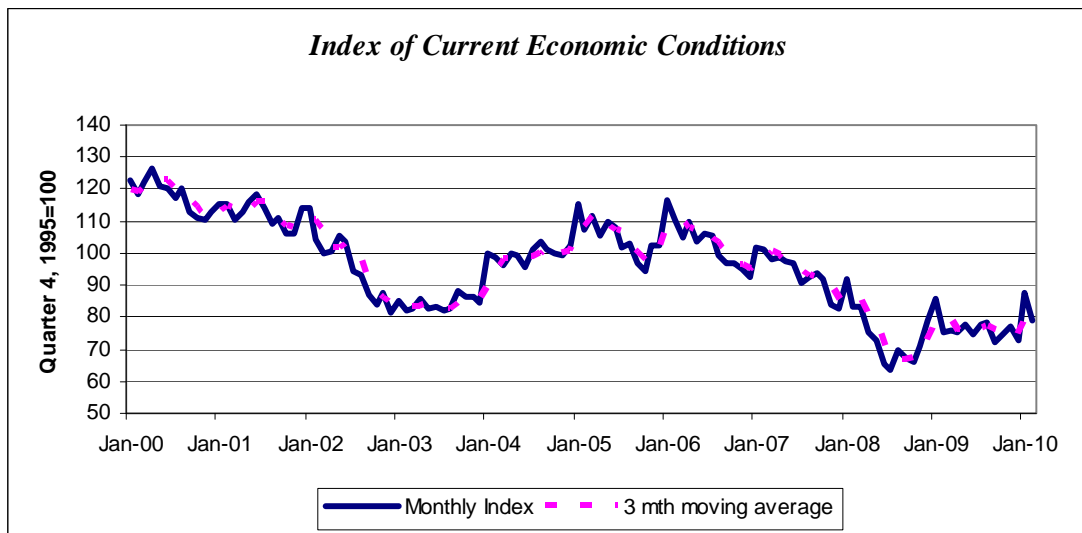
Consumer sentiment weakened in February. The overall Consumer Sentiment Index stood at 59.4 in February, compared to a figure of 64.6 in January. The corresponding figure for February 2009 was 44.2. The 3-month moving average rose to 59.1 compared to the 57.2 recorded in January. The 3-month moving average stood at 48.0 in February 2009.



The Consumer Sentiment Index comprises two sub-indices; an index of consumer expectation that focuses on how consumers view prospects over the next 12 months and an index of current economic conditions, focusing on the present situation.

The Index of Consumers Expectations is based on consumers' perceptions of their future financial situation, the economic outlook and employment expectations. The index value for February stood at 46.3 compared with 49.0 in January.

Consumers' perception of their current situation weakened in February, primarily due to a more negative perception of the buying climate. The value for this particular index was 78.8, compared with 87.7 in January.



Note:- Since May 2008 the KBC Bank Ireland/ESRI Irish consumer sentiment survey was prepared using a slightly different methodology. While this may have a minor impact on the precise numerical estimates of various survey components, it should not have any significant effect on the broad trends reported. The data was obtained from telephone interviews during the first two weeks of the month with around 800 completed questionnaires. The data were re-weighted in line with gender, age and level of educational attainment to ensure the data is fully representative of the national population of adults. Each index is calculated by computing the relative scores (the percent giving favorable replies minus the percent giving unfavorable replies (the balance), plus 100) for each question used in the different indices. Those who reply “Don’t Know”, “Remain the same” are excluded from the index calculations. Each relative score is rounded to the nearest whole number. The sum of the relative scores is then divided by the base period total for each index.

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Historic data from February 1996 are available on the ESRI website, www.esri.ie and on the KBC Bank Ireland website, www.kbc.ie. A detailed methodology note outlining how the indices are constructed and the most recent release are also available on the websites.