

Mineral Industry Surveys

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ANTIMONY IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2016

Imports of antimony products were 5,200 metric tons (t) in the first quarter of 2016, a 4% decrease from those in the fourth quarter of 2015, and a 19% decrease from those in the first quarter of 2015 (table 1). Antimony oxide comprised the majority of antimony imports during the first quarter of 2016, and the leading suppliers of antimony oxide to the United States were, in descending order of quantity, China, Belgium, Thailand, and Bolivia (fig. 1, table 2). China was the leading source of imported antimony metal (including alloys, waste and scrap) in the first quarter, accounting for 51% of imports (table 2). Exports of antimony during the first quarter of 2016 were 39% less than those in the preceding quarter and 19% less than those in the first quarter of 2015 (table 1).

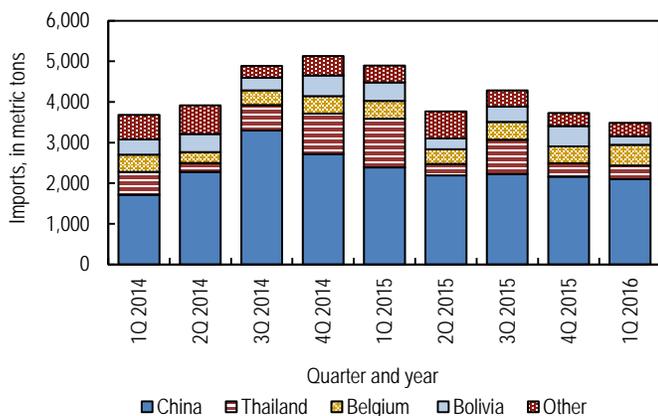


Figure 1. U.S. imports of antimony oxide from the first quarter of 2014 through the first quarter of 2016. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The average Platts Metals Week New York dealer price for antimony metal during the first quarter of 2016 was 260 cents per pound, 10% less than that during the fourth quarter of 2015, and 30% less than that in the first quarter of 2015. Antimony prices have trended downward since the third quarter of 2014 (fig. 2, table 1).

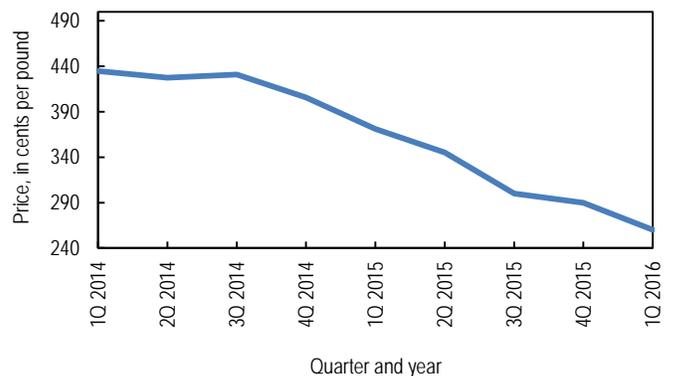


Figure 2. Average quarterly New York dealer price for 99.5% to 99.6% antimony metal from the first quarter of 2014 through the first quarter of 2016. Source: Platts Metals Week

United States Antimony Corp. (USAC) (Thompson Falls, MT) reported that it produced 414 t (912,841 pounds) of antimony (as contained metal) during the first quarter of 2016, a 75% increase from that during the same quarter of 2015. In the United States, USAC produced 221 t of antimony at its smelter in Montana, about 16% more than that produced during the same period of 2015. The smelter primarily produced antimony metal and oxide from imported intermediate antimony products. In Mexico, USAC produced 193 t of antimony during the first quarter of 2016, more than quadruple that produced during the first quarter of 2015. The increase in Mexico was attributed to a transition to processing concentrates from Australia during the first quarter of 2016 from a mixture of concentrates from Australia and Mexico in the first quarter of 2015 (United States Antimony Corp., 2016, p. 15, 17).

Update

In late February, Hsikwangshan Twinkling Star Co., Ltd. (one of the leading antimony mine and metal producers in China) stopped producing antimony concentrate at its concentrator in

Hunan Province owing to decreased antimony prices. The closure followed the reported February shutdown of its last operating antimony mine, the South Mine (see Antimony in the Fourth Quarter 2015). On April 15, Twinkling Star halted operation of a 1,800-ton-per-month-antimony blast furnace at its smelter owing to an insufficient supply of concentrates. On May 21, Twinkling Star restarted the blast furnace after having secured imported antimony concentrates in late April. It was unclear if production at the smelter would return to full capacity (Xu, 2016a, b).

China's State Reserve Bureau (SRB) reportedly planned to purchase 5,000 t of antimony metal for the national stockpile in mid-June. Past SRB antimony purchases have led to price increases (Xu, 2016b).

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References Cited

- United States Antimony Corp., 2016, Form 10-Q—For the quarterly period ended March 31, 2016: U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 23 p. (Accessed May 27, 2016, at <http://irdirect.net/filings/viewer/index/101538/000135448816007443/>.)
- Xu, Anna, 2016a, Chinese antimony producer Twinkling Star halts blast furnace operations on tight concentrates supply: Metal Bulletin, April 19. (Accessed May 27, 2016, via <https://www.metalbulletin.com/>.)
- Xu, Anna, 2016b, Twinkling Star resumes operations on imported antimony concentrate—domestic supply remains tight: Metal Bulletin, May 25. (Accessed May 27, 2016, via <https://www.metalbulletin.com/>.)

TABLE 1
SALIENT ANTIMONY STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, antimony content, unless otherwise specified)

| | 2015 ^p | | 2016 |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1st quarter–4th quarter | 4th quarter | 1st quarter |
| Imports for consumption: | | | |
| Ore and concentrate | 320 | 90 | 39 |
| Metal, alloys, waste and scrap (gross weight) | 5,790 | 1,180 | 1,680 |
| Oxide ² | 16,700 | 3,720 | 3,480 |
| Total | 22,800 | 5,000 | 5,200 |
| Exports: | | | |
| Ore and concentrate | 31 | 2 | 5 |
| Metal, alloys, waste and scrap (gross weight) | 1,440 | 316 | 195 |
| Oxide ² | 1,750 | 488 | 288 |
| Total | 3,220 | 806 | 488 |
| Price, average, cents per pound ³ | 326.51 | 290.00 | 260.00 |

^pPreliminary.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices; may not add to totals shown.

²Antimony content is calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey.

³Source: Platts Metals Week. New York dealer price for 99.5% to 99.6% metal, c.i.f. U.S. ports.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ANTIMONY, BY CLASS AND COUNTRY¹

(Metric tons, antimony content, unless otherwise specified)

| Class and country | 2015 | | 2016 | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|---------|----------|-------|---------------|
| | 1st quarter–4th quarter | 4th quarter | January | February | March | January–March |
| Ore and concentrate: | | | | | | |
| Italy | 266 | 76 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 36 |
| Other | 54 ^r | 14 | 3 | -- | -- | 3 |
| Total | 320 | 90 | 15 | 12 | 12 | 39 |
| Metal, alloys, waste and scrap (gross weight): | | | | | | |
| China | 3,050 | 565 | 430 | 153 | 268 | 851 |
| India | 1,420 | 270 | 103 | 128 | 120 | 351 |
| Mexico | 381 | 123 | 39 | 104 | 59 | 202 |
| United Kingdom | 354 | 83 | 29 | 23 | 15 | 67 |
| Vietnam | 242 | 142 | 30 | 40 | 20 | 90 |
| Other | 348 ^r | -- | 79 | -- | 40 | 119 |
| Total | 5,790 | 1,180 | 710 | 448 | 522 | 1,680 |
| Oxide:² | | | | | | |
| Belgium | 1,650 | 415 | 161 | 166 | 181 | 508 |
| Bolivia | 1,590 | 498 | 66 | 83 | 66 | 215 |
| China | 8,960 | 2,160 | 657 | 812 | 631 | 2,100 |
| France | 289 | 64 | -- | 16 | 16 | 32 |
| Japan | 479 | 95 | 6 | 65 | 80 | 151 |
| Mexico | 862 | 153 | 47 | 37 | 54 | 138 |
| Thailand | 2,660 | 332 | 149 | 50 | 133 | 332 |
| Other | 175 | 8 | 3 | 3 | -- | 6 |
| Total | 16,700 | 3,720 | 1,090 | 1,230 | 1,160 | 3,480 |
| Grand total | 22,800 | 5,000 | 1,810 | 1,690 | 1,700 | 5,200 |
| Other antimony compounds (gross weight) | 88 | 13 | 4 | 3 | -- | 7 |

^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Antimony content is calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.