

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN MARCH 2009

U.S. natural soda ash production in March was 732,000 metric tons (t), 9% higher than the previous month's production of 670,000 t, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The continued downturn in production was because of poor economic conditions affecting domestic and export sales.

Ending inventories for March 2009 were 280,000 t, 3% higher than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in March was 983,000 t. Total production of chemical caustic soda was withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

Apparent consumption of soda ash in February 2009 was 369,000 t, 7% lower than that of February 2008, and ending stocks were 43% higher.

Exports and imports of soda ash in February 2009 were 287,000 t and 495 t, respectively.

The trends in soda ash statistics for February 2009, compared with those of February 2008, were as follows: production was 24% lower; imports were 36% lower; exports were 44% lower; and apparent consumption, 7% lower. Imports and exports have dropped dramatically in 2009 compared with those of 2008 because of reduced domestic consumption of soda ash.

All percentages in this report were computed using unrounded data.

TABLE 1
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production ²	Ending stocks	
2008:			
January-March	2,760	XX	4,390
March	955	194	1,510
April	890	164	1,530
May	987	210	1,490
June	935	211	1,480
July	912	169	1,200
August	976	222	1,630
September	935	265	1,490
October	996	247	1,560
November	965	262	1,530
December	917	259	1,510
January-December	11,300	XX	17,800
2009:			
January	806	258	1,160
February	670	273	2,020
March	732	280	983
January-March	2,210	XX	4,160

XX Not applicable.

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

²Production data include soda ash equivalent from soda liquors only. Soda ash equivalent from mine water is not included. Soda liquors are withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

TABLE 2
U.S. EXPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY, IN 2009^{1,2}

(Metric tons and thousand dollars)

Country	January	February			Year to date		
		Quantity	Value ³	Unit Value	Quantity	% of total	Value
Argentina	--	17,800	\$4,720	\$265	17,800	3	\$4,720
Australia	7,000	7,000	2,190	313	14,000	2	3,490
Belgium	47,600	32,400	5,400	167	80,000	11	14,300
Brazil	50,200	28,200	5,040	178	78,400	11	15,600
Canada	21,800	21,100	4,290	203	42,900	6	8,220
Chile	19,800	10,000	2,080	207	29,800	4	6,390
Colombia	19,500	6,770	1,840	271	26,300	4	5,880
Costa Rica	4,500	4,920	1,420	287	9,420	1	2,500
Dominican Republic	1,980	2,000	570	285	3,980	1	1,160
Ecuador	--	5,770	1,710	296	5,770	1	1,710
France	15,000	--	--	--	15,000	2	2,480
Indonesia	9,600	--	--	--	9,600	1	2,080
Japan	6,000	20,500	2,850	139	26,500	4	3,480
Korea, Republic of	16,000	13,100	2,530	194	29,100	4	6,070
Mexico	57,000	56,300	11,900	212	113,000	16	24,100
Netherlands	23,800	11,100	2,430	219	34,900	5	6,860
New Zealand	--	7,000	1,300	185	7,000	1	1,300
Panama	2,110	--	--	--	2,110	(4)	632
Peru	8,550	--	--	--	8,550	1	1,870
Philippines	5,000	--	--	--	5,000	1	676
Portugal	13,500	6,000	1,410	235	19,500	3	2,830
Saudi Arabia	17,500	--	--	--	17,500	2	2,300
Singapore	--	185	20	108	185	(4)	20
South Africa	22,500	6,460	1,420	220	28,900	4	6,480
Spain	28,200	--	--	--	28,200	4	4,660
Taiwan	14,500	--	--	--	14,500	2	1,780
Thailand	--	17,500	3,580	204	17,500	2	3,580
Turkey	--	25	17	680	25	(4)	17
United Arab Emirates	7,520	--	--	--	7,520	1	990
Venezuela	4,000	12,400	2,980	240	16,400	2	4,000
Total	423,000	287,000	59,700	208 0	710,000	100	140,000

-- Zero.

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

²February 2009 data were not available at time of publication.

³Free alongside ship values at U.S. ports.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH^{1,2}

Period	Quantity (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)
2008:		
January-March	3,850	\$751
March	1,210	222
April	895	204
May	906	308
June	1,130	360
July	632	214
August	1,070	407
September	658	282
October	1,410	530
November	615	211
December	1,730	553
January-December	12,900	3,820
2009:		
January	169	108
February	495	241
January-February	664	349

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

²February 2009 data were not available at time of publication.

³Cost, insurance, and freight value at U.S. ports.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH¹
(Metric tons)

Period	Production	Imports	Exports	Net stock		Apparent consumption ²
				Increase	Decrease	
2008:						
January-March	2,760,000	3,850	1,330,000	--	11,800	1,440,000
March	955,000	1,210	429,000	3,820	--	524,000
April	890,000	895	430,000	--	30,300	492,000
May	987,000	906	383,000	45,600	--	559,000
June	935,000	1,130	531,000	1,550	--	405,000
July	912,000	632	417,000	--	41,900	538,000
August	976,000	1,070	414,000	52,600	--	511,000
September	935,000	658	417,000	43,200	--	475,000
October	996,000	1,410	468,000	--	18,000	547,000
November	965,000	615	525,000	15,000	--	426,000
December	917,000	1,730	455,000	--	2,750	466,000
January-December	11,300,000	12,900	5,370,000	53,200	--	5,860,000
2009:						
January	806,000	169	423,000	--	1,160	384,000
February	670,000	495	287,000	14,900	--	369,000
March	732,000	NA	NA	6,750	--	NA
January-February	1,480,000	664	710,000	13,700	--	753,000

NA Not available. -- Zero.

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

²Production plus imports minus exports plus or minus stock changes.