

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## ANTIMONY IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2011

Consumption of primary antimony in the first quarter of 2011 was estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey to be 185% higher than that in the fourth quarter of 2010 and 135% higher than that in the first quarter of 2010. During the first 2 months of 2011, antimony imports totaled 4,120 metric tons (t), an increase of 23% compared with those of the comparable period of 2010. During the first 2 months of 2011, China was the leading supplier of antimony metal and antimony oxide to the United States.

Antimony prices rose considerably during the first quarter of 2011. The Platts Metals Week New York dealer price for antimony metal started January at \$5.50 to \$5.70 per pound and increased steadily to finish at \$7.50 to \$7.85 per pound by the end of March.

Mountain Lake Resources Inc. (Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada) found significant levels of antimony present at its Little River gold-antimony property in Newfoundland, Canada. Recent analytical results from the latest drilling program showed antimony grades of up to 30%. Mountain Lake officials commented that the intervals of antimony were substantial and were typical of the material being mined at the nearby Beaver Brook antimony mine situated 80 kilometers (km) to the north of the Le Pouvoir Zone. Although originally optioned for its numerous gold occurrences, antimony-bearing veins containing stibnite have now been identified over a 20-km strike length at Mountain Lake. Beaver Brook is the only primary antimony mine in North America and is one of the leading antimony deposits in the world and the largest outside of China. Hunan Nonferrous Metals Corp. Ltd. (Zhuzhou, Hunan Province, China), the leading integrated metals producer in China by production volume, acquired 100% of the Beaver Brook Mine in October 2009 (Metal-Pages, 2011b).

China Minmetals Corp. (Beijing, China), China's leading metals trader, announced plans to double its profits by 2015 as it expands output and speeds up acquisitions of rare earth and minor metals production facilities. Minmetals completed the acquisition of a 51% stake in Hunan Nonferrous Metals Holding Group Co. in 2010. The firm owns China's largest deposits of antimony and is China's leading antimony producer (Bloomberg News, 2011).

Government officials in China's Hunan Lengshuijiang City, known locally as the "World of Antimony," announced that the area was facing an apparently diminished outlook for its future antimony production. Officials stated that after more than 110 years of continuous mining, Lengshuijiang, which accounts for 60% of global antimony reserves, now has only 5 years of mining life left (Metal-Pages, 2010a).

### Update

On June 2, 2011, the Platts Metals Week dealer price range for antimony was \$7.10 to \$7.45 per pound.

### References Cited

- Bloomberg News, 2011, China Minmetals says plans to double profit by 2015: Bloomberg News, January 20. (Accessed June 8, 2011, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/print/2011-01-20/china-minmetals-says-plans-to-double-profit-by-2015>.)
- Metal-Pages, 2010a, China's largest antimony producing region faces reserve depletion: Metal-Pages, October 29. (Accessed February 17, 2011, at <http://www.metal-pages.com/news/story/50043/>.)
- Metal-Pages, 2010b, Drill results show significant levels of antimony at Little River: Metal-Pages, December 23. (Accessed February 16, 2011, via <http://www.metal-pages.com>.)

TABLE 1  
SALIENT ANTIMONY STATISTICS<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons, antimony content, unless otherwise specified)

	2010 <sup>p</sup>		2011
	Year	Fourth quarter	First quarter
Production:			
Primary smelter	W	W	W
Secondary	W	W	W
Imports for consumption:	26,200	7,190	4,120 <sup>2</sup>
Ore and concentrate	180	56	19 <sup>2</sup>
Metal	5,360	1,520	1,210 <sup>2</sup>
Oxide <sup>3</sup>	20,600	5,610	2,890 <sup>2</sup>
Exports:	2,710	868	923 <sup>2</sup>
Ore and concentrate	169	63	46 <sup>2</sup>
Metal, alloys, waste and scrap	427	150	89 <sup>2</sup>
Antimony oxide <sup>3</sup>	2,120	655	788 <sup>2</sup>
Consumption of primary antimony	7,180 <sup>r</sup>	1,620 <sup>r</sup>	4,630
Price, average, cents per pound <sup>4</sup>	401.19	498.42	641.66
Stocks, end of period <sup>5</sup>	1,610	1,610 <sup>r</sup>	1,580

<sup>p</sup>Preliminary. <sup>r</sup>Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices.

<sup>2</sup>Data for January and February only; March data were not available at time of publication.

<sup>3</sup>Antimony content is calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey.

<sup>4</sup>Source: Platts Metals Week. New York dealer price for 99.5% to 99.6% metal, c.i.f. U.S. ports.

<sup>5</sup>Producer and consumer stocks.

TABLE 2  
INDUSTRY STOCKS OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY  
IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>1,2</sup>

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Class of material	2010 <sup>p</sup>	2011
	Fourth quarter <sup>r</sup>	First quarter
Oxide	1,100	1,040
Other <sup>3</sup>	507	540
Total	1,610	1,580

<sup>p</sup>Preliminary <sup>r</sup>Revised.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Estimated 100% coverage based on quarterly respondents that consumed 44% of the total stocks of antimony at the end of 2009.

<sup>3</sup>Includes ore and concentrate, sulfide, and residues.

TABLE 3  
CONSUMPTION OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY<sup>1,2</sup>

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Class of material consumed	2010 <sup>†,P</sup>		2011
	Year	Fourth quarter	First quarter
Oxide	5,850	1,350	4,080
Other <sup>3</sup>	1,330	269	548
Total	7,180	1,620	4,630

<sup>P</sup>Preliminary. <sup>†</sup>Revised.

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

<sup>2</sup>Estimated 100% coverage based on quarterly respondents and respondents who consumed 29% of the total antimony in 2009.

<sup>3</sup>Includes ores and concentrates, metal, sulfide, and residues.

TABLE 4  
CONSUMPTION OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY, BY CLASS OF MATERIAL PRODUCED<sup>1,2</sup>

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Product	2010 <sup>P</sup>		2011
	Year	Fourth quarter	First quarter
Metal <sup>2</sup>	W	W	W
Nonmetal <sup>3</sup>	W	W	W
Flame-retardants:			
Plastics	332	85	86
Other <sup>4</sup>	84 <sup>†</sup>	19	700
Total	416	104 <sup>†</sup>	786
Reported consumption	2,080	444	1,330
Total consumption <sup>5</sup>	7,180 <sup>†</sup>	1,620 <sup>†</sup>	4,630

<sup>P</sup>Preliminary. <sup>†</sup>Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Reported consumption."

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes adhesives, pigments, rubber, and textiles.

<sup>3</sup>Includes ammunition, antimonial lead, bearing metals and bearings, cable coverings, castings, sheet and pipe, and solder.

<sup>4</sup>Includes ammunition primers, pigments, ceramics and glass, and plastics.

<sup>5</sup>Estimated 100% coverage based on quarterly respondents and respondents who consumed 29% of the total antimony in 2009.

TABLE 5  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ANTIMONY, BY CLASS AND COUNTRY<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Class and country	2010			2011		
	Year <sup>2</sup>	December	Fourth quarter <sup>2</sup>	January	February	January-February
<b>Ore and concentrate:</b>						
Italy	112	31	56	--	19	19
Other	68	--	--	--	--	--
Total	180	31	56	--	19	19
<b>Metal:</b>						
Australia	194	--	--	--	--	--
China	4,530	702	1,350	471	365	836
India	43	--	--	--	100	100
Japan	56	--	29	30	--	30
Mexico	363	13	41	82	8	90
United Kingdom	50	--	--	4	101	105
Vietnam	79	--	20	--	--	--
Other	39	68	78	48	--	48
Total	5,360	783	1,520	635	574	1,210
<b>Oxide:<sup>3</sup></b>						
Belgium	1,860	91	432	129	225	354
Bolivia	597	183	250	66	--	66
China	15,800	1,540	4,490	1,680	560	2,240
France	130	--	1	--	--	--
Japan	302	53	58	52	11	63
Mexico	1,610	124	332	70	79	149
Netherlands	111	--	--	--	--	--
Taiwan	196	16	47	8	16	24
Other	21	--	--	--	--	--
Total	20,600	2,010	5,610	2,000	891	2,890
Grand total	26,200	2,820	7,190	2,640	1,480	4,120
Other antimony compounds (gross weight)	36	3	11	1	5	6

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>May include revisions to prior months data.

<sup>3</sup>Antimony content is calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.