

Mineral Industry Surveys

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ANTIMONY IN THE FOURTH QUARTER 2013

Imports of antimony products were 5,810 metric tons (t) in the fourth quarter of 2013, a decrease of 18% from that in the third quarter of 2013, but an increase of 7% from that in the fourth quarter of 2012. In 2013, total imports of antimony were 24,700 t, a 9% increase from those in 2012. During 2013, the leading suppliers of antimony oxide to the United States were, in descending order, China, Bolivia, Thailand, Belgium, and Mexico. China was the leading source of imported antimony metal in 2013, accounting for 63% of imports. Exports of antimony in 2013 were 4,010 t, a 17% decrease from those in 2012.

The Platts Metals Week New York dealer price for antimony metal averaged \$4.70 per pound in October 2013 and decreased to an average of \$4.30 per pound in December. The 2013 average annual price of antimony was \$4.63 per pound, an 18% decrease from that in 2012.

In 2012, First Liberty Power Corp. (FLPC) (Las Vegas, NV) announced plans to construct a mill to upgrade ore at its Fencemaker antimony project, about 194 kilometers northeast of Reno, NV. (See Antimony in the Fourth Quarter 2012.) On October 14, FLPC began mining stibnite ore for upgrade and sale. By mid-December, more than 500 t of raw ore had been produced and would be upgraded to 50% to 60% antimony for shipment in January to to Shenyang Huachang Antimony Chemical Co., Ltd. in China for further refining under the terms of a sales contract (First Liberty Power Corp., 2013a, b).

U.S. Antimony Corp. (USAC) (Thompson Falls, MT) reported that overall antimony production (as contained metal) in 2013 was 807 t compared to 646 t in 2012, an increase of 25%. The company operated a smelter in Montana and a smelter and mines in Mexico. During 2013, sales of antimony products increased by about 80 t from those in 2012 owing to an increase in volume of raw material received from Mexico. Total antimony production in Mexico was about 310 t, an increase of 84% from that in 2012. During the past few years, the company has focused on increasing its antimony production in Mexico. In December, USAC reported that one of its antimony-producing mines that ships directly to its smelter came on-stream during the third quarter of 2013. Another property that supplied mill feed to the flotation mill received its explosive license and was

providing mined underground rock rather than dump rock. The smelter at Madero was operating at 100% of its capacity, and a permit was being prepared to triple its throughput. Natural gas was to be hooked up early in January 2014 at the smelter to reduce fuel costs by approximately 70% (U.S. Antimony Corp., 2013; 2014, p. 3).

In October, Tri-Star Resources Plc (London, United Kingdom), an integrated antimony development company, announced that it had entered into a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding with Oman Investment Fund, a sovereign wealth fund of the Sultanate of Oman, and Castell Investments Ltd. (a subsidiary of Dubai Transport Co.) to establish a joint venture company to construct and operate an antimony roaster in Oman. The roaster would to have the capacity to produce 20,000 metric tons per year of antimony metal and antimony trioxide and cost \$60 million to build. The first full year of operation was expected to be 2016. Raw materials (sulfide concentrates) were to be imported from Tri-Star's mines in Canada and Turkey and other suppliers, and the antimony metal and trioxide produced were expected to be exported primarily to customers in Asia, Europe, and the United States (Tri-Star Resources Plc, 2013).

In October, China's State Reserve Bureau purchased 10,500 t of antimony for its national stockpile. The purchase was made in two parts, with 4,500 t purchased at \$10,755 per ton for immediate delivery and the remaining 6,000 t to be delivered during the next several months. China stockpiled about 4,500 t of antimony in 2012. Separately, in December, China's Ministry of Commerce released minor metals export quotas for the first half of 2014. During the first half of 2014, the export quotas were 6,301 t of antimony metal and 41,477 t of antimony trioxide, compared to 7,128 t of metal and 33,544 t of antimony trioxide during the same period in 2013 (Hu, 2013; Metal Bulletin, 2013).

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TABLE 1
SALIENT ANTIMONY STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, antimony content, unless otherwise specified)

	2013					
	2012	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter
Imports for consumption:						
Ore and concentrate	380	105	44	100 ^r	92	342
Metal	5,050	1,250	1,350	1,940	1,630	6,170
Oxide ²	17,200	4,220	4,860	5,020	4,090	18,200
Total	22,600	5,570	6,250	7,060	5,810	24,700
Exports:						
Ore and concentrate	106	14	2	14	6	36
Metal, alloys, waste and scrap (gross weight)	847	484	452	334	284	1,550
Oxide ²	3,870	849	750	474	349	2,420
Total	4,820	1,350	1,200	822	639	4,010
Price, average, cents per pound ³	564.51	482.67	467.92	443.25	456.67	462.63

^rRevised.

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

²Antimony content was 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)

Class and country	2012	2013						
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	October	November	December	January–December
Ore and concentrate:								
China	100	50	7	17	--	16	--	90
Italy	261	25	37	65	34	12	30	203
Other	19	31	--	18	--	--	--	49
Total	380	105	44	100^r	34	28	30	342
Metal:								
China	3,760	724	913	1,180	547	308	207	3,880
Hong Kong	144	115	66	216	--	51	--	448
India	745	264	219	300	40	20	60	903
Japan	81	7	32	--	--	--	--	39
Mexico	149	43	11	41	37	39	--	171
Peru	--	15	56	102	63	47	21	304
United Kingdom	88	34	26	46	28	18	9	161
Other	88	45	22	55	43	77	19	261
Total	5,050	1,250	1,350	1,940	759	559	316	6,170
Oxide:²								
Belgium	1,270	398	416	305	137	106	89	1,450
Bolivia	1,640	511	462	812	266	183	166	2,400
China	11,700	2,740	2,970	2,680	602	715	581	10,300
France	378	65	63	133	29	63	71	424
Japan	450	315	24	17	8	89	10	463
Mexico	1,040	187	238	291	105	44	94	959
Thailand	382	--	564	780	249	116	365	2,070
Other	319	--	116	--	--	--	--	116
Total	17,200	4,220	4,860	5,020	1,400	1,320	1,380	18,200
Grand total	22,600	5,570	6,250	7,060	2,190	1,900	1,720	24,700
Other antimony compounds (gross weight)	39	9	5	1	5	1	6	27

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.