

Mineral Industry Surveys

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ANTIMONY IN THE SECOND QUARTER 2002

The price for antimony metal remained fairly steady during the second quarter. The New York dealer price range for antimony metal, published by Platts Metals Week, started the quarter at \$0.62 to \$0.67 per pound and rose moderately to \$0.67 to \$0.71 per pound by the end of the quarter.

Industry observers noted that world antimony supply had tightened as the second quarter ended. Antimony imports by the United States declined noticeably. Most observers attributed tight supplies to antimony mine closures in China. Concurrently, perhaps due to a general economic slowdown in industrialized countries, there was evidence of a drop in demand for antimony worldwide.

The U.S. Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), which manages the National Defense Stockpile, is a major source of supply for some domestic antimony consumers. During the second quarter, DLA sold 522 metric tons (t) of antimony metal to five dealers and consumers; an additional 2,295 t is available for sale until October 1, 2002. DLA antimony is considered to be of lower quality than Chinese antimony, which accounts for most U.S. antimony imports, but DLA antimony is still acceptable to most domestic consumers (Platts Metals Week, 2002a).

In South Africa, the Metorex mining group has been

increasing antimony production at its Consolidated Murchison antimony mine to take advantage of rising prices (Platts Metals Week, 2002c).

The Rathborne Energy Co. (New Orleans, LA) announced that it may buy the historic Sunshine Mine, near Kellogg, ID. Rathborne plans to conduct a due diligence study of the now defunct silver-lead-copper-antimony mine. The study requires powering up the main mine hoist in the Jewell Shaft and restarting the mine's ventilation system. Rathborne officials indicated that the firm sought to obtain an option on Sunshine, which historically produced significant quantities of antimony as a byproduct of silver mining. The Sunshine Mine, a high-cost silver producer, closed in early 2001. At the time of its closure, the mine had been the sole U.S. producer of antimony (Platts Metals Week, 2002b).

References Cited

- Platts Metals Week, 2002a, Chinese antimony supplies remain tight, demand steady: Platts Metals Week, v. 73, no. 21, May 27, p. 1.
Platts Metals Week, 2002b, Lights turned on at shuttered Sunshine Silver Mine: Platts Metals Week, v. 73, no. 24, June 17, p. 6.
Platts Metals Week, 2002c, Metorex steps up antimony output: Platts Metals Week, v. 73, no. 23, June 10, p. 9.

TABLE 1
SALIENT ANTIMONY STATISTICS 1/

(Metric tons, antimony content, unless otherwise specified)

	2001	2002	
		First quarter	Second quarter
Production:			
Primary smelter 2/	18,000 r/	W	W
Secondary	6,660 r/	1,410	1,340
Imports for consumption:	37,900 r/	4,430 r/	3,840 3/
Ore and concentrate	2,290	281 r/	360 3/
Metal	12,600	1,520 r/	849 3/
Oxide 4/	23,000	4,150 r/	3,840 3/
Exports:	9,340 r/	5,320	740 3/
Metal, alloys, and scrap (gross weight)	1,730 r/	439	786 3/
Oxide 4/	5,880 r/	4,880	1,960 3/
Consumption of primary antimony	13,000 r/	3,690 r/	3,650
Price: Average cents per pound 5/	65.50	60.84 r/	64.45
Stocks, end of period 6/	10,300	5,060 r/	5,620

r/ Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

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

2/ Nearly all smelter output is trioxide.

3/ Data for April and May only.

4/ Antimony content is calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey.

5/ New York dealer price for 99.5% to 99.6% metal, c.i.f. U.S. ports.

6/ Producer and consumer stocks.

TABLE 2
INDUSTRY STOCKS OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY IN THE
UNITED STATES 1/

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Class of material	2002	
	First quarter r/	Second quarter
Metal	774	769
Oxide	4,030	4,600
Other 3/	253	254
Total	5,060	5,620

r/ Revised.

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

2/ Estimated 100% coverage based on reports from respondents who held 90% of the total stocks of antimony at the end of 2001.

3/ Includes ore and concentrate, sulfide, and residues.

TABLE 3
INDUSTRIAL CONSUMPTION OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY 1/ 2/

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Class of material consumed	2001 r/	2002	
		First quarter	Second quarter
Metal	1,620	W	W
Oxide	11,300	3,160 r/	3,130
Other 3/	80	525 r/	526
Total	13,000	3,690 r/	3,650

r/ Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other."

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

2/ Estimated 100% coverage based on reports from respondents who consumed 69% of the total antimony in 2001.

3/ Includes sulfide and residues.

TABLE 4
REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY, BY CLASS OF
MATERIAL PRODUCED 1/

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Product	2001 2/	2002 2/	
		First quarter	Second quarter
Metal:			
Bearing metals and bearings	W	W	W
Other 3/	2,800 r/	862 r/	845
Total	2,800 r/	862 r/	845
Nonmetal:			
Ceramics and glass	W	W	W
Plastics	W	W	W
Other 4/	2,590 r/	775 r/	796
Total	2,590 r/	775 r/	796
Flame-retardants:			
Plastics	6,210 r/	1,530 r/	1,910
Other 5/	1,380 r/	521 r/	106
Total	7,580 r/	2,050 r/	2,010
Total reported	13,000 r/	3,690 r/	3,650

r/ Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other."

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

2/ Estimated 100% coverage based on reports from respondents who consumed 69% of the total antimony in 2001.

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

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

5/ Includes adhesives, pigments, rubber, and textiles.

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

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Class and country	2001	2002				January- May 2/
		First quarter 2/	March	April	May	
Ore and concentrate:						
Australia	314	--	--	--	--	--
China	1,530	100	--	199	98	397
Other	444	181	124	36	26	243
Total	2,290	281	124	235	125	640
Metal:						
China	9,730	1,150	478	344	144	1,640
Hong Kong	1,780	--	--	38	18	56
Mexico	667	231	--	--	265	496
Peru	--	100	--	--	--	100
Singapore	123	--	--	--	--	--
Other	315	34	9	--	40	74
Total	12,600	1,520	486	382	467	2,370
Oxide:						
Belgium	3,130	879	460	394	392	1,670
China	9,150	841	348	431	1,030	2,300
Hong Kong	656	166	166	100	17	282
Mexico	6,710	1,760	654	612	614	2,990
South Africa	3,110	459	338	224	--	684
Other	205	44	13	8	23	74
Total	23,000	4,150	1,980	1,770	2,080	7,990
Grand total	37,900	5,950	2,590	2,390	2,670	11,000
Other antimony compounds (gross weight)	94	2	--	--	3	5

-- Zero.

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

2/ Includes revisions to prior months' data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Antimony content is calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey.