

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2013

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the first quarter of 2013 were 2.66 million metric tons (Mt), 5% greater than those in the fourth quarter of 2012 and 3% greater than those in the first quarter of 2012. Jamaica (46%), Guinea (29%), and Brazil (25%) were the leading sources of crude dry bauxite imports in the first quarter of 2013. Imports of crude and dried bauxite during the first quarter of 2013 increased slightly from Jamaica and by 56% from Brazil compared with those in the fourth quarter of 2012. This increase was partially offset by 8% and 81% declines, respectively, from Guinea and other countries.

Imports of alumina during the first quarter of 2013 were 628,000 metric tons (t), 55% greater than those in the fourth quarter 2012 and 33% higher than those in the first quarter of 2012. The leading sources of imported alumina during the first quarter of 2013 were Australia (38%), Suriname (35%), Brazil (10%), and Jamaica (10%). Increased alumina imports from Australia of 125,000 t and Jamaica of 52,200 t accounted for most of the increase in alumina imports compared with those in the fourth quarter of 2012.

Exports of alumina during the first quarter of 2013 were 474,000 t, 4% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2012 but 4% more than those in the first quarter of 2012. The leading destinations of alumina exported during the first quarter of 2013 were Canada (44%), Iceland (13%), and Russia (13%).

Update

Production from the 3.8-million-metric-ton-per-year (Mt/yr) Gove refinery in Northern Territory, Australia, in the first quarter of 2013 was 12% lower than in the fourth quarter of 2012 and 10% lower than in the first quarter of 2012. Rio Tinto plc cited unplanned maintenance after discovering problems with one of the refinery's digesters for the production decline. Rio Tinto projected repairs would be completed by yearend and estimated alumina production would be 2 Mt in 2013, 700,000 t less than that in 2012 (Rio Tinto plc, 2013, p. 5, 12).

Alumina production from the Corporación Venezolana de Guayana (CVG) Bauxilum refinery in Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela, was 50.8% lower in March 2013 than that in March 2012. The refinery has been producing at about 30% of its 2-Mt/yr capacity owing to deteriorating machinery and equipment. Bauxite production in March 2013 from CVG's Los Pijiguaos Mine was 97.4% lower than that in March 2012, and there was no production in February 2013. Problems with mining equipment were cited for the production decline at the 5.8-Mt/yr mine (Soules, 2013).

References Cited

Rio Tinto plc, 2013, First quarter 2013 operations review: London, United Kingdom, Rio Tinto plc media release, April 16, 27 p. (Accessed May 22, 2013, at http://www.riotinto.com/media/media-releases-237_8343.aspx.)
Soules, George, 2013, Bauxilum's March alumina production down 50.8%: *Platts Metals Daily*, v. 2, no. 77, April 22, p. 4-5.

TABLE 1
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CRUDE AND DRIED BAUXITE¹

(Metric tons)

Country	2012				1st quarter–	2013
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter
Imports (for consumption):						
Brazil	580,000	776,000	812,000	421,000	2,590,000	658,000
Guinea	842,000	589,000	491,000	842,000	2,760,000	775,000
Jamaica	1,140,000	1,160,000	1,220,000	1,190,000	4,720,000	1,210,000
Other	6,570	90,700	94,100	83,300	275,000	16,000
Total	2,570,000	2,620,000	2,620,000	2,530,000	10,300,000	2,660,000
Exports:						
Canada	573	848	2,650	4,740	8,810	842
Mexico	797	--	--	--	797	--
Other	139	319	397	139	994	187
Total	1,510	1,170	3,050	4,880	10,600	1,030

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CALCINED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY¹

(Metric tons)

Country	2012										2013	
	1st quarter		2d quarter		3d quarter		4th quarter		1st quarter-4th quarter		1st quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports (for consumption):												
Australia	--	49,400	--	43,300	--	--	--	558	--	93,200	--	43,100
Brazil	--	1,180	--	620	--	482	--	--	--	2,280	6,550	45,000
China	12,600	3,820	3,290	3,020	8,830	--	13,000	4,000	37,700	10,800	6,830	5,370
Greece	--	--	--	26,800	--	27,400	--	26,700	--	81,000	--	--
Guyana	17,700	28,400	12,600	19,400	9,970	54,200	5,760	--	46,000	102,000	15,400	18,200
Other	45	2,270	52	3,890	65	26,000	215	82	377	32,200	18	983
Total	30,400	85,000	15,900	97,100	18,900	108,000	19,000	31,400	84,200	321,000	28,800	113,000
Exports:												
Canada	1,140	--	1,410	--	1,000	--	849	--	4,400	--	487	--
India	--	20	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20	--	--
Malaysia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	60
Mexico	121	12,200	363	--	121	--	224	--	829	12,200	122	--
United Arab Emirates	250	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	250	--	--	--
Other	296	--	144	447	376	2	223	7	1,040	456	499	--
Total	1,810	12,200	1,920	447	1,500	2	1,300	7	6,520	12,700	1,110	60

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF ALUMINA¹

(Metric tons, calcined equivalent)

Country	2012				1st quarter–	2013
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter
Imports (for consumption):²						
Australia	138,000	190,000	191,000	114,000	632,000	239,000
Brazil	60,300	55,800	78,800	46,500	241,000	62,600
Jamaica	14,200	2,000	26,300	8,830	51,300	61,000
Suriname	212,000	156,000	190,000	197,000	754,000	220,000
Other	47,700	57,600	79,700	38,300	223,000	45,600
Total	471,000	461,000	565,000	404,000	1,900,000	628,000
Exports:³						
Canada	209,000	164,000	189,000	220,000	781,000	208,000
China	29,400	25,400	2,340	1,540	58,700	1,140
Egypt	11	31,000	91	51,100	82,300	52,600
France	373	260	175	256	1,060	167
Georgia	114,000	28,500	85,600	5	228,000	59,000
Iceland	61,500	58,400	63,600	63,000	247,000	61,100
Mexico	26,200	25,400	23,500	21,100	96,200	15,900
Netherlands	1,240	1,420	28,500	900	32,000	1,120
Norway	50	43	41	51	185	58
Russia	212	86	31,100	88,800	120,000	59,700
Other	16,100	14,500	47,800	45,400	124,000	14,600
Total	457,000	349,000	471,000	492,000	1,770,000	474,000

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

²Includes imports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 185,000 metric tons (t) (revised) in 2012; 57,900 t in the first quarter of 2013.

³Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 134,000 t in 2012; 21,800 t in the first quarter of 2013.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.