

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE THIRD QUARTER 2014

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the third quarter of 2014 were 2.47 million metric tons (Mt), 10% less than those in the second quarter of 2014 but 18% greater than those in the third quarter of 2013. Jamaica (49%), Brazil (33%), and Guinea (16%) were the leading sources of crude dry bauxite imports in the third quarter of 2014. Imports of crude and dried bauxite from Guinea during the third quarter of 2014 decreased by 311,000 metric tons (t) (44%) compared with those in the second quarter of 2014.

Imports of alumina during the third quarter of 2014 were 402,000 metric tons (t), 8% less than those in the second quarter 2014 and 15% less than those in the third quarter of 2013. Decreased alumina imports from Australia of 94,400 t, compared with those in the second quarter, were partially offset by increased imports from Suriname (18,200 t) and Venezuela (26,200 t). Venezuela had not been a supplier of alumina imports in previous quarters in the year. The leading sources of imported alumina during the third quarter were Suriname (38%), Australia (24%), and Brazil (18%).

Exports of alumina during the third quarter of 2014 were 502,000 t, 3% more than those in the second quarter of 2014 but 22% less than those in the third quarter of 2013. The leading destinations of alumina exported during the third quarter of 2014 were Canada (41%), Norway (18%), Egypt (12%), and Iceland (12%).

Update

On October 11, Sherwin Alumina Co. LLC, a subsidiary of Glencore International Ltd., locked out 450 employees represented by the United Steelworkers union at its alumina refinery in Gregory, TX, after the employees rejected a contract offer on October 10. Issues in the contract dispute included health care contributions, pay for unscheduled work, and wages. Production from the 1.6-million-metric-ton-per-year (Mt/yr) alumina refinery continued by management employees and temporary workers (Laliberte, 2014; Lim, 2014; Matyi, 2014).

Glencore reported that alumina production from the refinery in the third quarter of 2014 was 19% less than that in the second quarter and 23% less than that of the same quarter in 2013. Decreased demand was cited for the temporary shutdown of one of the five production units in June, resulting in the decreased production (Phang, 2014).

On December 1, Alcoa World Alumina and Chemicals Ltd. (AWAC) finalized the sale of its 55% share of Jamalco to Noble Group Ltd. The Government of Jamaica would retain ownership of 45% of the joint venture. The Jamalco assets included a 1.48 Mt/yr alumina refinery at Clarendon, Jamaica, and a 3.7-Mt/yr bauxite mine at Manchester, Jamaica. AWAC, a joint venture between Alcoa Inc. (60%) and Alumina Ltd. (40%) would continue as the operator under a 3-year service agreement (Alcoa Inc., 2014). In the past 3 years, Alcoa has been selling or shutting down some of its high-cost upstream assets in order to focus on higher value downstream assets.

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

(Metric tons)

Country	2013	2014			1st quarter– 3d quarter
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	
Imports (for consumption):					
Brazil	2,480,000	736,000	722,000	805,000	2,260,000
Guinea	2,510,000	798,000	707,000	396,000	1,900,000
Jamaica ²	4,710,000	1,140,000	1,260,000	1,200,000	3,600,000
Other	126,000	74,700	58,800	71,200	205,000
Total	9,830,000	2,750,000	2,750,000	2,470,000	7,970,000
Exports:					
Canada	3,560	478	686	559	1,720
Mexico	14	21	651	--	672
Other	779	119	116	78	313
Total	4,350	618	1,450	637	2,710

-- Zero.

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

²Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

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	2014									
	2013		1st quarter		2d quarter		3d quarter		1st quarter– 3d quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports (for consumption):										
Australia	--	128,000	--	50,800	--	31,400	--	72,000	--	154,000
Brazil	9,590	88,900	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
China	64,300	13,000	7,780	1,540	21,900	4,280	17,300	3,870	47,000	9,690
Greece	--	50,500	--	39,800	--	45,700	24,000	--	24,000	85,500
Guyana	56,900	169,000	--	5,270	--	5,630	11,300	58,000	11,300	68,800
Other	109	2,410	40	221	122	320	--	185	162	726
Total	131,000	453,000	7,820	97,600	22,000	87,300	52,600	134,000	82,400	319,000
Exports:										
Canada	6,630	--	2,000	--	1,400	--	1,320	--	4,720	--
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Malaysia	--	60	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	631	--	171	140	133	--	67	498	371	638
United Arab Emirates	228	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	895	55	401	67	144	--	258	1	803	68
Total	8,390	115	2,570	207	1,670	--	1,650	499	5,890	706

-- 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	2014				
	2013	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	1st quarter– 3d quarter
Imports (for consumption):²					
Australia	760,000	189,000	191,000	96,200	475,000
Brazil	241,000	62,300	62,800	70,900	196,000
Jamaica ³	162,000	8,520	--	--	8,520
Suriname	724,000	150,000	136,000	154,000	439,000
Venezuela	--	--	--	26,200	26,200
Other	160,000	40,800	49,200	54,600	145,000
Total	2,050,000	450,000	438,000	402,000	1,290,000
Exports:⁴					
Canada	792,000	134,000	110,000	204,000	448,000
China	6,230	46,200	13,500	1,970	61,700
Egypt	391,000	123,000	94,000	60,500	277,000
Georgia	156,000	31,100	55,200	(⁵)	86,300
Iceland	292,000	117,000	65,700	58,000	241,000
Mexico	79,100	27,100	25,300	26,600	79,100
Norway	223,000	95,000	71,200	91,300	257,000
Russia	215,000	31,800	559	30,500	62,900
Other	92,800	15,200	50,600	28,800	94,700
Total	2,250,000	620,000	486,000	502,000	1,610,000

-- Zero.

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: 193,000 metric tons (t) in 2013; 53,600 (revised) t in the first quarter of 2014; 45,000 (revised) t in the second quarter of 2014 and 52,500 t in the third quarter of 2014.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 113,000 t in 2013; 36,400 t in the first quarter of 2014; 31,000 (revised) t in the second quarter of 2014 and 32,700 t in the third quarter of 2014.

⁵Less than ½ unit.

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