

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

E. Lee Bray, Bauxite and Alumina Commodity Specialist
 National Minerals Information Center
 U.S. Geological Survey
 989 National Center
 Reston, VA 20192
 Telephone: (703) 648-4979, Fax: (703) 648-7757
 Email: lbray@usgs.gov

Linda M. Barnes (Data)
 Telephone: (703) 648-7986
 Fax: (703) 648-7975
 Email: lbarnes@usgs.gov

Internet: <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/>

BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2017

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the first quarter of 2017 were 790,000 metric tons (t), 17% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2016 and 47% less than those in the first quarter of 2016 (fig. 1). Jamaica (86%) and Brazil (14%) were the leading sources of crude and dried bauxite imports in the first quarter of 2017 (table 1).

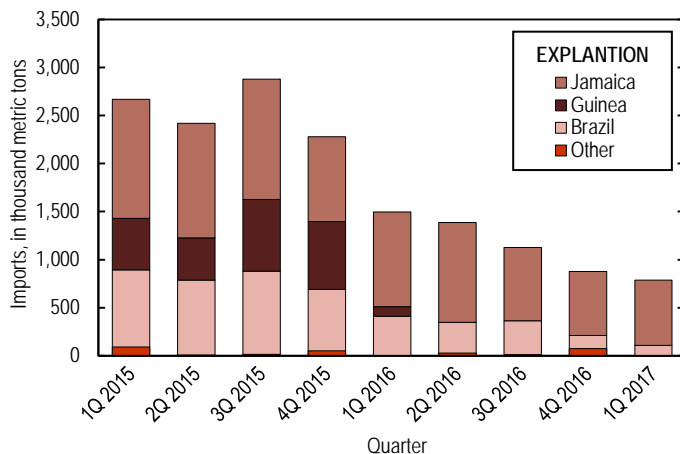


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the first quarter of 2015 through the first quarter of 2017. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the first quarter of 2017 were 308,000 t, 16% more than the amount in the fourth quarter of 2016 and 17% more than those in the first quarter of 2016 (fig. 2). The leading sources of imported alumina during the first quarter of 2017 were Brazil (38%), Australia (32%), and Jamaica (12%).

Exports of alumina during the first quarter of 2017 were 105,000 t, 41% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2016 and 75% less than those in the first quarter of 2016 (fig. 2). The leading destinations for alumina exported during the first quarter of 2017 were the United Arab Emirates (30%), and the

Netherlands (26%). Decreased alumina exports, increased alumina imports, and decreased bauxite imports were attributed to the 2016 shutdowns of the alumina refineries in Gregory, TX, by Sherwin Alumina Co. and in Point Comfort, TX, by Alcoa Corp. (See Bauxite and Alumina in the Second Quarter 2016.)

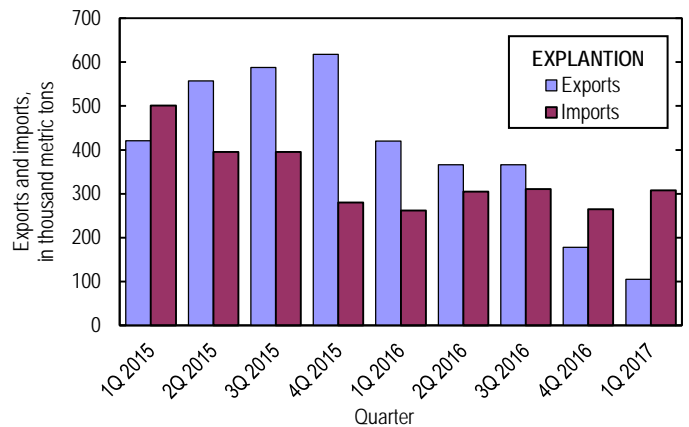


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the first quarter of 2015 through the first quarter of 2017. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

Noranda Bauxite & Alumina Inc. announced that it would upgrade its 1.2-million-metric-ton-per-year (Mt/yr) alumina refinery at Gramercy, LA, to produce more chemical-grade alumina. The project would cost \$35 million and be completed by yearend 2019 (Maltais, 2017).

Jiuquan Iron and Steel Group announced that it would restart the Aluminum Partners of Jamaica (Alpart) alumina refinery in Jamaica in June. The 1.67-Mt/yr alumina refinery and adjacent 4.9-Mt/yr bauxite mine were shut down in 2009 by the previous owner, United Company Rusal Plc. Jiuquan purchased the refinery and mine from Rusal in November 2016 (Lim, 2017a).

The Government of Indonesia modified its ban on exports of bauxite in January. Exports of bauxite and other unprocessed ores were banned in January 2014 as part of a mining law designed to increase investment in mineral processing facilities. Under the modified rules, an export permit system was put in place for 5 years and companies seeking to export unprocessed ores would be required to commit to building processing facilities in Indonesia (Ghilotti, 2017).

Malaysia extended its ban on bauxite mining until at least June 30. The Government of Malaysia imposed the mining ban in January 2016, citing concerns about pollution and illegal mining (Lim, 2017b). After Indonesia banned exports of bauxite in 2014, mines in Malaysia increased bauxite production from about 200,000 t in 2013 to 35 million metric tons in 2015.

Orbite Technologies Inc. stopped trial production of high-purity alumina in March, citing equipment issues. Inspection of the plant's calciner identified issues with the heating system, which would require about 8 months to repair, pending the availability of financing. Orbite used high-alumina clay as the raw material for its 3-metric-ton-per-day refinery at Cap-Chat, Quebec, Canada. Trial production started in January.

Construction on the plant started in 2014 (Orbite Technologies Inc., 2017).

References Cited

- Ghilotti, Davide, 2017, Indonesia eases bauxite export ban: Industrial Minerals, no. 591, March, p. 17.
- Lim, Joanna, 2017a, China's Jiuquan Iron & Steel to start up Jamaican Alpart alumina refinery around mid-end June: Platts Metals Daily, v. 6, no. 111, June 8, p. 1.
- Lim, Joanna, 2017b, Malaysia extends bauxite mining ban by three months to June 30: Platts Metals Daily, v. 6, no. 62, March 29, p. 5.
- Maltais, Kirk, 2017, Noranda plans \$35M Gramercy refinery upgrade: American Metal Market, v. 125, no. 21-3, May 24, p. 8.
- Orbite Technologies Inc., 2017, Orbite reports first quarter 2017 results: Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Orbite Technologies Inc. press release, May 15. (Accessed June 21, 2017, at <http://www.orbitetech.com/English/investors/news/news-details/2017/Orbite-Reports-First-Quarter-2017-Results/default.aspx>.)

List services and web feed subscribers are the first to receive notification of USGS minerals information publications and data releases. For information on how to subscribe, go to <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/>.

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

(Metric tons)

Country	2016				1st quarter– 4th quarter	2017 1st quarter
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter		
Imports (for consumption):						
Brazil	411,000	348,000	364,000	213,000	1,340,000	109,000
Guinea	101,000	--	--	--	101,000	--
Jamaica ²	985,000	1,040,000	763,000	663,000	3,460,000	679,000
Other	--	28,500	13,400	76,100	118,000	2,550
Total	1,500,000	1,420,000	1,140,000	952,000	5,010,000	790,000
Exports:						
Canada	750	1,210	912	1,140	4,000	352
Mexico	19	--	--	--	19	153
Other	171	226	201	303	901	146
Total	940	1,430	1,110	1,440	4,920	651

-- 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	2016										2017	
	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	--	48,000	--	49,500	--	49,500	--	22,800	--	170,000	--	49,500
Brazil	547	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	547	--	--	--
China	11,300	2,210	13,800	3,390	27,500	3,410	353	4,320	53,000	13,300	17,300	2,900
Greece	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Guyana	11,100	58,500	5,330	98,500	5,890	41,300	6,230	43,600	28,500	242,000	11,300	24,100
India	--	--	--	300	2,720	--	565	--	3,290	300	--	--
Turkey	--	--	--	25,000	--	--	--	--	--	25,000	--	--
Other	461	50	25	23	516	70	206	55,000	1,210	55,200	--	--
Total	23,400	109,000	19,100	177,000	36,600	94,200	7,360	126,000	86,500	506,000	28,600	76,500
Exports:												
Canada	1,110	--	1,230	--	384	--	266	--	2,990	--	934	--
China	3,510	--	3,810	--	1,700	--	4,460	--	13,500	--	7,440	--
Mexico	20	27	2,740	--	46	--	19	13	2,830	40	53	--
Other	157	26	56	46	38	--	222	10	473	82	173	--
Total	4,800	53	7,840	46	2,170	--	4,970	23	19,800	122	8,600	--

-- 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	2016				1st quarter– 4th quarter	2017 1st quarter
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter		
Imports (for consumption):²						
Australia	88,100	95,800	95,000	94,900	374,000	98,500
Brazil	72,000	142,000	120,000	65,300	400,000	117,000
Jamaica ³	48,600	4,270	52,500	58,900	164,000	35,600
Suriname	15,000	19,900	--	--	34,900	--
Venezuela	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	38,600	43,400	43,000	45,600	171,000	56,600
Total	262,000	305,000	311,000	265,000	1,140,000	308,000
Exports:⁴						
Canada	59,600 ^r	8,710	9,680 ^r	7,740 ^r	85,700	11,900
China	37,200	986	26,400	9,070	73,700	968
Egypt	30,000	5	29,900	9	59,900	16
Iceland	118,000	119,000	158,000	--	395,000	--
Mexico	27,400	30,000	10,900 ^r	8,650	77,000	11,400
Netherlands	20,700	27,500	24,800	47,200	120,000	27,500
Norway	19	53	56	72	200	19
Russia	21	62,900	7	42	63,000	157
Sweden	251	31,600	172 ^r	244	32,300	218
United Arab Emirates	62,500	62,200	94,000	62,900	282,000	31,800
Other	64,200	22,500	11,700	42,400	141,000	21,100
Total	420,000	366,000	366,000	178,000	1,330,000	105,000

^rRevised. -- 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: 224,000 metric tons (t) in 2016; 94,400 t in the first quarter of 2017.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 105,000 t in 2016; 18,100 t in the first quarter of 2017.

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