

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## BISMUTH IN THE SECOND QUARTER 2009

Bismuth consumption in the United States for the second quarter of 2009 was estimated to be 348 metric tons (t), which was 20% higher than that of the first quarter of 2009, and 19% lower than that in the second quarter of 2008. Imports of bismuth in the second quarter totaled 238 t, an increase of 28% from those in the first quarter of 2009, and a decrease of 50% from those in the second quarter of 2008.

The price of bismuth drifted lower in the second quarter of 2009. The New York dealer price for bismuth, as published in Platts Metals Week, started April 2009 at \$7.50 to \$8.75 per pound and decreased through the second quarter to end June at \$6.00 to \$7.00 per pound.

Met-Mex Penoles S.A. de C.V. (Torreon, Mexico), a significant bismuth producer, was struck in February by its employees who sought a wage increase. In March, Met-Mex invoked a force majeure clause under which a company can claim it is unable to fulfill their obligations to customers owing to circumstances beyond its control. The 66-day strike ended in April (Metal-Pages Ltd., 2009b).

In Bolivia, the Mining and Metallurgy Ministry announced that exports of bismuth ingots from the Telamayo smelter in

Potosi Department would begin in June 2009. The smelter, which was restarted in late 2008 following an investment of \$1 million, refined minerals such as antimony, arsenic, bismuth, copper, tin, and tungsten. Telamayo produced 1 metric ton per day of bismuth, which is a byproduct of refined copper, lead, and tin (Metal-Pages Ltd., 2009a)

### Update

On September 10, 2009, the Platts Metals Week price for bismuth was \$8.00 to \$9.00 per pound.

### References Cited

- Metal-Pages Ltd., 2009a, Bismuth exports from Bolivia to restart in June in poor market: London, United Kingdom, Metal-Pages Ltd., April 22. (Accessed September 15, 2009, via [metal-pages.com/](http://metal-pages.com/).)
- Metal-Pages Ltd., 2009b, Penoles strike ends after two months: London, United Kingdom, Metal-Pages Ltd., April 15. (Accessed September 15, 2009, via [metal-pages.com/](http://metal-pages.com/).)

TABLE 1  
SALIENT BISMUTH STATISTICS<sup>1</sup>

(Kilograms unless otherwise specified)

	2008 <sup>p</sup>	2009	
		First quarter	Second quarter
Consumption <sup>2</sup>	2,360,000	290,000	348,000
Exports <sup>3</sup>	375,000	110,000	60,200
Imports for consumption	1,930,000	186,000	238,000
Price per pound, dealer, average of period	\$12.11	\$8.31	\$7.43
Stocks, end of period, consumer	228,000	233,000	227,000

<sup>p</sup>Preliminary.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Estimated, based on net imports.

<sup>3</sup>Comprises bismuth metal and the bismuth content of alloys and waste and scrap.

TABLE 2  
ESTIMATED BISMUTH METAL CONSUMED  
IN THE UNITED STATES, BY USE<sup>1</sup>

(Kilograms)

Use	2008 <sup>p</sup>	2009	
		First quarter	Second quarter
Chemicals <sup>2</sup>	1,250,000	164,000	183,000
Bismuth alloys	56,200	18,800	18,000
Metallurgical additives	938,000	102,000	141,000
Other	108,000	5,090	5,280
Total	2,360,000	290,000	348,000

<sup>p</sup>Preliminary.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, may not add to totals shown.

<sup>2</sup>Includes industrial and laboratory chemicals, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals.

TABLE 3  
U.S. EXPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF BISMUTH METAL, BY COUNTRY<sup>1</sup>

(Kilograms)

Country	2008	2009					
		March	First quarter	April	May	June	January-June
Argentina	8,340	--	22	--	21	--	43
Belgium	--	10,600	10,600	8,340	--	--	19,000
Brazil	28,400	--	7,270	--	--	--	7,270
Canada	55,100	773	3,900	3,620	235	1,470	9,230
China	3,210	1,540	1,540	8,250	--	--	9,800
Colombia	3,120	1,230	1,230	--	--	--	1,230
Costa Rica	2,130	--	--	--	--	--	--
Czech Republic	3,400	--	99	--	--	--	99
Dominican Republic	8,950	--	665	--	--	762	1,430
France	13,600	35,200	35,200	5,840	--	3,110	44,200
Germany	3,380	--	163	--	--	--	163
Hong Kong	1,730	1,610	1,610	--	--	--	1,610
Israel	3,490	--	--	--	--	--	--
Japan	4,460	--	--	--	800	800	1,600
Mexico	76,400	4,750	25,900	4,030	7,990	869	38,800
Saudi Arabia	1,470	--	--	--	--	27	27
Singapore	8,680	--	100	--	150	--	250
Thailand	25,500	547	3,110	1,110	--	--	4,220
United Kingdom	101,000	--	--	--	585	100	685
Vietnam	18,400	6,650	18,800	3,970	--	7,480	30,200
Other	3,580	51	191	331	--	283	805
Total	375,000	63,000	110,000	35,500	9,780	14,900	171,000

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF BISMUTH METAL, BY COUNTRY<sup>1</sup>

(Kilograms)

Country	2008	2009					
		March	First quarter	April	May	June	January-June
Belgium	509,000	20,000	50,700	44,700	46,400	50,100	192,000
Canada	18,500	1,220	2,250	340	648	7	3,240
China	998,000	29,800	96,700	19,400	29,500	15,000	161,000
France	23,100	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hong Kong	93,500	--	--	--	--	--	--
Kazakhstan	--	--	9,850	--	--	--	9,850
Mexico	40,000	--	--	--	--	--	--
Peru	55,700	--	--	4,790	11,600	6,770	23,100
Russia	--	3	3,200	--	--	--	3,200
United Kingdom	186,000	4,010	22,800	--	7,650	1,360	31,800
Other	2,180	160	210	5	250	--	465
Total	1,930,000	55,200	186,000	69,300	95,900	73,300	424,000

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.