

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

M. Michael Miller, Fluorspar Commodity Specialist
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-7716, Fax: (703) 648-7757
E-mail: mmiller1@usgs.gov

Samir Hakim (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7955
Fax: (703) 648-7792
E-mail: shakim@usgs.gov

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

FLUORSPAR IN THE FOURTH QUARTER 2010

Reported fluorspar consumption in the fourth quarter was 108,000 metric tons (t), a decrease of about 4% compared with that of the previous quarter and nearly 10% more than that consumed in the fourth quarter of 2009. Fourth quarter stocks increased by nearly 25% compared with those of the previous quarter and were nearly 18% higher than those of the fourth quarter of 2009.

The following yearend totals are compared with those of 2009. In 2010, reported fluorspar consumption increased by 48,000 t, or 12%, and apparent consumption (imports minus exports and adjusted for changes in stocks) increased by 29,000 t, or 6%, to 502,000 t. Fluorspar imports increased by 64,000 t, or 13%. Imports of hydrofluoric acid (HF) increased by 18% to 135,000 t. This was in line with HF imports in 2008 but was still significantly below the peak reached in 2006, when HF imports totaled 156,000 t.

End-of-fourth-quarter-2010 import prices for Chinese acidspar increased to \$370 to \$400 per metric ton (dry basis, cost, insurance, freight, U.S. Gulf of Mexico port) from those of the previous quarter at \$350 to \$380 per metric ton. The price range for Mexican low-arsenic acidspar [free on board (f.o.b.) Tampico] increased slightly to \$290 to \$320 per ton from \$280 to \$320 per ton in the previous quarter. The price range for regular acidspar from Mexico, f.o.b. Tampico, was essentially unchanged at \$260 to \$290 per ton. The price range for South African acidspar, f.o.b. Durban, increased to \$290 to \$310 per ton from \$260 to \$290 per ton in the previous quarter (Industrial Minerals, 2011b).

Fluorspar prices were expected to rise in early 2011 as demand picks up, particularly in China. Rising prices for Chinese acidspar would provide upward pressure on prices of acidspar from other major exporting countries, such as Mexico

and South Africa (Industrial Minerals, 2011a).

Industry News

Maghreb Minerals plc (London, United Kingdom) announced plans to take a controlling interest in South African fluorspar company Sallies Ltd. (Pretoria) in an all-shares deal. Maghreb was expected to purchase the 66.9% stake in Sallies held by Firebird Global Master Funds, giving it a total holding of 78.3%, in return for 335.6 million Maghreb shares. The ownership share would trigger a mandatory offer to minority shareholders. Maghreb raised \$10 million in financing in a rights issue and would use the funds to restart fluorspar production from Sallies' Witkop Mine. After remodeling the geology and mining plans, Maghreb intended to produce 125,000 metric tons per year of acidspar from Witkop for the export market and a small amount of metspar for domestic markets. It was estimated that it would take 3 months to bring Witkop into production once the decision was made to restart operations. Maghreb also agreed to acquire Firebird's 20% shareholding in Kenya Fluorspar Co. Ltd. in return for 100.3 million Maghreb shares (Seccombe, 2010).

References Cited

- Industrial Minerals, 2011a, New year brings sharp uptick in chemical-grade fluorspar demand: Industrial Minerals, January 26. (Accessed January 26, 2011, via <http://www.indmin.com>.)
- Industrial Minerals, 2011b, Prices: Industrial Minerals, no. 520, January, p. 57–59.
- Seccombe, Allan, 2010, New owner to restart Witkop—Maghreb Minerals has plans to reopen mothballed Sallies fluorspar mine: Business Day, December 29. (Accessed February 8, 2011, at <http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=130469>.)

TABLE 1
SALIENT FLUORSPAR STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise specified)

	2009		2010			
	Fourth quarter	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	Total or average
Imports for consumption:						
Quantity	154,000	131,000	131,000	146,000	131,000	539,000
Average value per ton, c.i.f. U.S. port, metallurgical grade	\$97	\$98	\$103	\$100	\$102	\$100
Exports	4,720	5,290	4,740	3,430	4,420	17,900
End of quarter stocks, consumer	103,000	107,000	108,000	97,100 ^r	121,000	XX
Imports for consumption of hydrofluoric acid	28,900	29,100	34,300	36,500	35,000	135,000
Imports for consumption of cryolite	1,250	1,520	960	1,650	1,190	5,320
Quarterly reported fluorspar consumption	98,500	116,000	112,000	112,000	108,000	448,000

^rRevised. XX Not applicable.

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

TABLE 2
CONSUMPTION OF FLUORSPAR BY END USE AND ASSAY RANGE¹
(DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN IN THE UNITED STATES)

(Metric tons)

	Hydrofluoric acid and other uses ²	Metallurgical	Total	Stocks, end of period ³
2009:				
First quarter:				
More than 97% calcium fluoride	84,100	2,220	86,300	120,000
Not more than 97% calcium fluoride	--	3,440	3,440	18,100
Total	84,100	5,660	89,800	138,000
Second quarter:				
More than 97% calcium fluoride	91,500	2,220	93,700	81,100
Not more than 97% calcium fluoride	--	4,050	4,050	15,000
Total	91,500	6,270	97,700	96,100
Third quarter:				
More than 97% calcium fluoride	106,000	2,220	108,000	85,600
Not more than 97% calcium fluoride	--	6,530	6,530	13,800
Total	106,000	8,750	114,000	99,500
Fourth quarter:				
More than 97% calcium fluoride	89,900	2,720	92,700	87,200
Not more than 97% calcium fluoride	2,030	3,850	5,870	15,600
Total	92,000	6,570	98,500	103,000
Grand total	373,000	27,200	400,000	XX
2010:				
First quarter:				
More than 97% calcium fluoride	107,000	2,720	110,000	93,400
Not more than 97% calcium fluoride	--	6,010	6,010	13,400
Total	107,000	8,730	116,000	107,000
Second quarter:				
More than 97% calcium fluoride	102,000	2,720	105,000	95,200
Not more than 97% calcium fluoride	--	7,120	7,120	12,400
Total	102,000	9,840	112,000	108,000
Third quarter:				
More than 97% calcium fluoride	102,000	2,720	105,000	85,000 ^r
Not more than 97% calcium fluoride	--	7,120	7,120	12,100
Total	102,000	9,840	112,000	97,100 ^r
Fourth quarter:				
More than 97% calcium fluoride	98,400	2,720	101,000	109,000
Not more than 97% calcium fluoride	--	7,120	7,120	12,400
Total	98,400	9,840	108,000	121,000
Grand total	410,000	38,300	448,000	XX

^rRevised. XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

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

²May include cement, enamel, glass and fiberglass, steel castings, hydrofluoric acid, and welding rod coatings.

³Stocks include some distributor stocks and consumer stocks for hydrofluoric acid.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF FLUORSPAR, BY COUNTRY AND VALUE^{1, 2}

	2009		2010									
	Fourth quarter		First quarter		Second quarter		Third quarter		Fourth quarter		Total	
	Quantity (metric tons)	Value (thousands)										
Containing more than 97% calcium fluoride:												
China	13,600	\$3,190	40,100	\$10,100	28,000	\$8,160	10,400	\$3,230	20,200	\$7,000	98,700	\$28,500
Mexico	94,300	15,400	51,200	8,850	66,600	11,500	90,100	15,700	79,400	13,900	287,000	49,900
Mongolia	19,100	5,210	--	--	11,900	3,400	--	--	10,200	2,900	22,100	6,300
South Africa	7,660	2,000	13,500	3,410	9,900	2,510	9,900	2,380	--	--	33,300	8,300
United Kingdom	2	5	1	5	1	5	554	66	3	4	559	80
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--	118	15	134	17	252	32
Total	135,000	25,800	105,000	22,400	116,000	25,600	111,000	21,400	110,000	23,800	442,000	93,100
Containing not more than 97% calcium fluoride:												
Mexico	19,300	1,880	25,700	2,520	14,400	1,480	35,400	3,540	21,100	2,160	96,500	9,690
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	3	--	--	1	3
Total	19,300	1,880	25,700	2,520	14,400	1,480	35,400	3,540	21,100	2,160	96,500	9,690
Grand total	154,000	27,700	131,000	24,900	131,000	27,100	146,000	24,900	131,000	25,900	539,000	103,000

-- Zero.

¹Imports for consumption include imports of immediate entry and warehouse withdrawals.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF HYDROFLUORIC ACID¹

	2009		2010									
	Fourth quarter		First quarter		Second quarter		Third quarter		Fourth quarter		Total	
	Quantity (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)										
Canada	2,330	\$9,030	2,300	\$7,810	2,630	\$10,100	4,080	\$13,500	2,950	\$10,500	12,000	\$41,900
China	1,210	1,110	1,270	1,260	1,770	2,100	1,790	2,230	1,690	2,230	6,520	7,820
Germany	101	304	127	281	92	308	76	255	61	219	356	1,060
Japan	185	427	206	490	172	413	228	545	286	663	892	2,110
Mexico	25,000	31,300	25,200	31,600	29,600	38,000	30,200	38,000	29,800	37,200	115,000	145,000
Other	97	262	46	105	109	245	143	331	159	348	457	1,030
Total	28,900	42,500	29,100	41,500	34,300	51,100	36,500	54,800	35,000	51,100	135,000	199,000

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

²Cost, insurance, and freight at U.S. ports.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.