

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## MAGNESIUM IN THE FOURTH QUARTER 2016

U.S. magnesium exports in 2016 were 26% more than exports in 2015. Canada (52%) and Mexico (29%) were the principal destinations. Exports of alloys and scrap increased by 43% and 129%, respectively, and exports of metal and semifabricated magnesium products each increased slightly. Magnesium imports for consumption in 2016 were 7% less than imports in 2015. Israel was the source of 66% of imported magnesium metal, and Russia was the source of 14%. Scrap accounted for 48% of the imports in 2016, 44% of which came from Canada and 27% came from the United Kingdom.

Average daily magnesium prices in China decreased by 4% during the fourth quarter 2016. Average daily magnesium prices in Europe increased slightly during the quarter (table 2).

**Update**

Qinghai Salt Lake Magnesium Co. conducted a trial run of the dehydration unit at its new 100,000-metric-ton-per-year electrolytic magnesium smelter in Golmud, Qinghai Province, China. The anhydrous magnesium chloride would be used as feedstock for the smelter. Production of magnesium was planned for the first quarter 2017 (Lee, 2017b).

China produced 829,000 metric tons (t) of magnesium in the first 11 months of 2016, 4% more than in the same period of 2015. Exports of magnesium metal from China were 224,000 t, 8.4% more than those in 2015. Exports of magnesium alloys from China were 117,000 t, slightly more than those in 2015 (Lee, 2017a; Yee, 2017a; b).

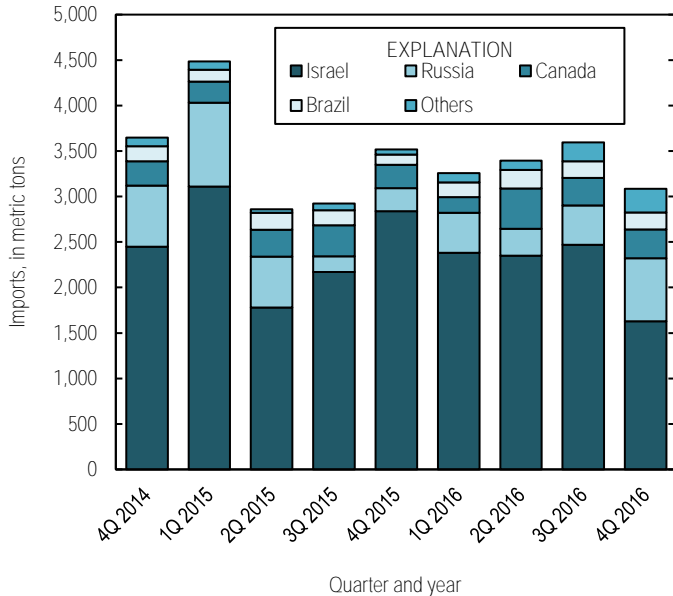


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of magnesium metal from the fourth quarter 2014 through the fourth quarter 2016. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The U.S. spot Western average price for magnesium was unchanged in the fourth quarter 2016. The average U.S. spot dealer price for imported magnesium was unchanged but the price range increased slightly during the fourth quarter 2016.

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**References Cited**

Lee, Winnie, 2017a, China’s Jan-Nov magnesium output up 4% to 829,200 mt: Platts Metals Daily, v. 6, no. 6, January 10, p. 8.  
 Lee, Winnie, 2017b, China’s Qinghai Salt Lake completes 100k mt/year smelter trial: Platts Metals Daily, v. 6, no. 2, January 4, p. 7.  
 Yee, Alvin, 2017a, China’s Dec Mg alloy exports down 8% on year to 10,079 mt: Platts Metals Daily, v. 6, no. 16, January 24, p. 6.  
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TABLE 1  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS OF MAGNESIUM<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons)

	2015	2016				
		January– September	October	November	December	January– December
<b>Imports for consumption:</b>						
Metal	13,800 <sup>r</sup>	10,300 <sup>r</sup>	1,030	846	1,210	13,300
Waste and scrap	21,300	17,100	1,830	1,910	1,070	21,900
Alloys (magnesium content)	7,870 <sup>r</sup>	5,710 <sup>r</sup>	554	402	380	7,040
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (magnesium content)	6,260 <sup>r</sup>	2,540 <sup>r</sup>	258	241	224	3,260
Total	49,200 <sup>r</sup>	35,600 <sup>r</sup>	3,670	3,400	2,880	45,600
<b>Exports:</b>						
Metal	5,220	3,460	405	880	527	5,270
Waste and scrap	432	591	168	145	87	990
Alloys (gross weight)	7,490	7,370	1,220	1,390	770	10,700
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (gross weight)	2,060	1,680	240	77	79	2,080
Total	15,200	13,100	2,040	2,490	1,460	19,100

<sup>r</sup>Revised.

<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 2  
MAGNESIUM PRICES, FOURTH QUARTER 2016

		Beginning of quarter	End of quarter
U.S. spot dealer import	dollars per pound	1.49–1.53	1.47–1.55
U.S. spot Western	do.	2.10–2.20	2.10–2.20
China	dollars per metric ton	2,350–2,400	2,250–2,300
European free market	do.	2,300–2,375	2,300–2,400
do. Ditto.			

Source: Platts Metals Week.