

Mineral Industry Surveys

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ALUMINUM IN FEBRUARY 2012

Domestic primary aluminum production in February 2012 was 167,000 metric tons (t). The average daily production was 5,770 t, essentially the same as that for the previous month and 16% higher than that for February 2011.

Total aluminum recovered from scrap in February 2012 was 274,000 t, slightly more than the amount recovered in the previous month and 15% more than the amount recovered in February 2011. Of this, 147,000 t of aluminum was recovered from new scrap, essentially the same amount as in the previous month and 12% more than the amount in February 2011. Aluminum recovered from old scrap in February 2012 totaled 127,000 t, 4% more than the amount in January and 19% more than the amount in February 2011.

Update

Alcoa Inc. temporarily shut down the casthouse at the 135,000-metric-ton-per-year (t/yr) West Smelting Plant at Massena, NY, after a fire on March 29. Primary aluminum production at the smelter was not affected, and molten aluminum was being shipped to other locations for casting or use by customers. The cause of the fire was still under investigation, and no repair schedule was announced (Waite, 2012a).

Negotiations between Rio Tinto Alcan Inc. and the labor union representing employees at the 438,000-t/yr Alma smelter at Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Quebec, Canada, resumed in late March and ended in early April without reaching an agreement or scheduling further talks. (See Aluminum in November 2011.) Two-thirds of the smelter's capacity was shut down in the labor dispute and employee lockout that started January 1 (Waite, 2012c).

A 3-month long strike at Nichols Aluminum LLC (Lincolnshire, IL) in Davenport, IA, ended in mid-April. The strike involving 225 employees at a rolling mill and remelt furnace started January 20 when contract talks broke down. An

agreement for a new contract had not been reached but negotiations were continuing after employees agreed to return to work (Waite, 2012b).

In March, Wise Alloys LLC (Muscle Shoals, AL) opened a new facility to melt aluminum scrap from used beverage cans (UBC). The furnace in the expanded facility was estimated to have a melting capacity of 225,000 t/yr of aluminum and would increase the company's UBC melting capacity by 55% (Wise Alloys LLC, 2012).

Alcoa and the Government of Italy reached an agreement to keep the 150,000-t/yr Portovesme smelter open and set a September 1 deadline to find a buyer. Alcoa had announced in January that the smelter would be permanently closed during the first half of 2012 because of high power costs and declining aluminum prices. (See Aluminum in November 2011.) If the sale of the smelter is not completed by October 31, the smelter is expected to be shutdown in November (Trabattoni, 2012).

The upward trend of the monthly average U.S. market price of primary aluminum ingot continued, with the monthly average price increasing to \$1.07 per pound in February from \$1.034 per pound in January. The monthly average price in March increased to \$1.079 per pound.

References Cited

- Trabattoni, Alina, 2012, Alcoa to push back closure of Italian aluminum smelter: *Platts Metals Week*, v. 83, no. 14, April 2, p. 1, 13.
- Waite, Suzy, 2012a, Fire probe continues at Alcoa facility: *American Metal Market*, v. 119, no. 16-3, April 18, p. 3.
- Waite, Suzy, 2012b, Nichols plant back at full work force: *American Metal Market*, v. 119, no. 16-2, April 17, p. 9.
- Waite, Suzy, 2012c, No Alma resolution in sight as Alcan-union talks hit wall: *American Metal Market*, v. 119, no. 14-3, April 4, p. 9.
- Wise Alloys LLC, 2012, Wise Metals cuts ribbon for expanded recycling facility named Element 13: Muscle Shoals, AL, Wise Alloys LLC press release, March 2, 3 p.

TABLE 1
COMPONENTS OF ALUMINUM SUPPLY¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Primary production	Secondary recovery ²			Imports for consumption			Total new supply ³	Stocks, end of period ⁴
		New	Old	Total	Metals and alloys, crude	Plates, sheets, bars, etc.	Total		
2011	1,986	1,630 ^r	1,400 ^r	3,030 ^r	2,830	880	3,710	8,730 ^r	1,060
2011:									
February	140	131 ^r	107	238 ^r	212	63	275	652 ^r	1,060
March	162	137 ^r	122	259 ^r	232	75	307	728	1,070
April	162	134 ^r	117	251 ^r	220	68	288	701 ^r	1,110
May	170	136 ^r	123	258 ^r	285	73	358	787	1,100
June	167	136 ^r	122	258 ^r	263	74	337	762 ^r	1,090
July	171	135 ^r	120 ^r	256 ^r	220	70	290	719	1,100
August	172	148 ^r	123	271 ^r	241	85	327	770 ^r	1,090
September	169	138 ^r	119	257 ^r	263	86	349	775 ^r	1,080
October	175	141 ^r	118	259 ^r	243	78	321	755 ^r	1,060
November	171	129 ^r	112	241 ^r	192	74	266	679 ^r	1,050
December	177	126 ^r	111	237 ^r	245	70	315	729 ^r	1,060
January–February	291 ^r	270 ^r	211	482 ^r	423	128 ^r	551	1,320 ^r	1,060
2012:									
January	178	146 ^r	122 ^r	268 ^r	281	70	351	797	1,110
February	167	147	127	274	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
January–February	346	293	249	542	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

^rRevised. NA Not available.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except "Primary production"; may not add to totals shown.

²Metallic recovery from purchased, tolled, or imported scrap, expanded for full coverage of industry.

³Primary production, secondary recovery, and imports for consumption.

⁴Inventory levels reflect total for both U.S. and Canadian producers; data from the Aluminum Association Inc.

TABLE 2
ESTIMATED FULL COVERAGE CONSUMPTION OF AND METALLIC RECOVERY FROM
PURCHASED NEW AND OLD ALUMINUM SCRAP¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Secondary smelters		Independent mill fabricators		Foundries		Other consumers		Total	
	Con- sump- tion	Metal recovery	Con- sump- tion	Metal recovery	Con- sump- tion	Metal recovery	Con- sump- tion	Metal recovery	Con- sump- tion	Metal recovery
	2011 ^r	2,210	1,650	1,460	1,320	61	53	7	7	3,740
2011:										
February	174 ^r	130 ^r	113	103	5	4	1	1	293 ^r	238 ^r
March	186 ^r	139 ^r	126	115	5	4	1	1	318 ^r	259 ^r
April	178 ^r	131 ^r	127	115	5	4	1	1	310 ^r	251 ^r
May	186 ^r	137 ^r	128	116	5	4	1	1	320 ^r	258 ^r
June	186 ^r	139 ^r	126	114	5	4	1	1	318 ^r	258 ^r
July	185 ^r	138 ^r	124 ^r	113	5	4	1	1	315 ^r	256 ^r
August	192 ^r	144 ^r	134 ^r	122 ^r	5	4	1	1	332 ^r	271 ^r
September	187 ^r	140 ^r	123 ^r	112 ^r	5	4	1	1	317 ^r	257 ^r
October	192 ^r	143 ^r	122 ^r	110 ^r	5	4	1	1	319 ^r	259 ^r
November	186 ^r	138 ^r	108 ^r	97 ^r	5	4	1	1	299 ^r	241 ^r
December	184 ^r	136 ^r	106 ^r	96 ^r	5	4	1	1	296 ^r	237 ^r
January–February	349 ^r	259 ^r	233 ^r	212	10	9 ^r	1 ^r	1 ^r	593 ^r	482 ^r
2012:										
January	208 ^r	150 ^r	125 ^r	113 ^r	5	4	1	1	339 ^r	268 ^r
February	211	155	126	114	5	4	1	1	343	274
January–February	419	305	251	227	10	9	1	1	681	542

^rRevised.

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

TABLE 3
CONSUMPTION OF AND RECOVERY FROM PURCHASED
NEW AND OLD ALUMINUM SCRAP IN FEBRUARY 2012¹

(Metric tons)

	Consumption		Calculated metallic recovery	
	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage
	Secondary smelters	176,000	211,000	129,000
Independent mill fabricators	114,000	126,000	103,000	114,000
Foundries	4,230	5,070	3,690	4,430
Other consumers	482	579	481	577
Total	294,000	343,000	237,000	274,000

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

TABLE 4
PURCHASED AND TOLL-TREATED ALUMINUM-BASE SCRAP AND SWEATED PIG IN FEBRUARY 2012¹

(Metric tons)

	February			January–February ²		
	Stocks, opening ²	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed	Stocks, closing	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed
New scrap:						
Extrusion	19,900	36,700	37,300	19,400	73,500	73,700
Can stock clippings	22,400	22,800	21,700	23,400	44,000	44,900
Other wrought sheet/clippings	10,500	39,600	40,700	9,450	74,500	78,500
Casting	2,290	5,520	5,420	2,390	11,100	11,100
Borings and turnings	4,290	10,600	10,500	4,410	21,400	21,300
Dross and skimmings	16,300	51,800	51,800	16,300	107,000	107,000
Total new scrap	75,700	167,000	167,000	75,300	332,000	337,000
Old scrap:						
Used castings	5,280	24,000	22,700	6,650	47,300	46,900
Used extrusion	9,360	13,200	14,200	8,400	26,400	27,100
Used cans (shredded, loose, baled)	51,100	59,800	58,000	52,900	115,000	110,000
Other wrought products	11,600	23,100	24,400	10,300	51,300	50,500
Fragmentized shredder (auto shredder)	1,420	8,120	7,820	1,720	15,400	15,200
Total old scrap	78,700	128,000	127,000	79,900	255,000	249,000
Sweated pig	55	33	33	55	65	65
Total all classes	154,000	295,000	294,000	155,000	587,000	586,000

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

²May include revisions to previously published data.

³Includes data on imported aluminum-base scrap.

TABLE 5
ALUMINUM ALLOYS PRODUCED AT SECONDARY SMELTERS IN THE UNITED STATES IN FEBRUARY 2012^{1,2}

(Metric tons)

	February				January–February ³	
	Stocks, opening ³	Production	Net shipments	Stocks, closing	Production	Net shipments
Die-cast alloys:						
13% Si, 360, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	2,710	4,390	3,970	3,140	8,230	7,900
380 and variations	10,500	19,800	19,800	10,500	39,600	39,600
Sand and permanent mold:						
95/5 Al-Si, 356, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	1,900	4,240	4,240	1,900	8,490	8,490
No. 319 and variations	3,490	5,630	5,640	3,470	11,300	11,300
F-132 alloy and variations	450	439	439	450	878	878
Al-Zn alloys	99	143	143	99	286	286
Al-Si alloys (0.6% to 2.0% Cu)	111	292	292	111	584	584
Al-Cu alloys (1.5% Si, max.)	170	162	162	170	324	324
Other ⁴	2,180	8,670	9,040	1,810	17,300	17,700
Wrought alloys, extrusion billets	16,200	42,400	42,600	16,000	83,700	83,700
Total all alloys	37,800	86,200	86,300	37,700	171,000	171,000
Less:						
Primary aluminum consumed	XX	12,100	XX	XX	24,300	XX
Primary silicon consumed	XX	2,090	XX	XX	4,210	XX
Other alloying ingredients consumed	XX	1,350	XX	XX	2,710	XX
Net metallic recovery from aluminum scrap and sweated pig consumed in production of secondary aluminum ingot ⁵						
	XX	70,600	XX	XX	139,000	XX

XX Not applicable.

¹Excludes integrated aluminum companies.

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

³May include revisions to previously published data.

⁴Includes alloys No. 12, Al-Mg, Al-Si-Cu-Ni, aluminum-base hardeners, variations of these alloys, plus other aluminum alloys.

⁵No allowance made for melt-loss of primary aluminum and alloying ingredients.

TABLE 6
AVERAGE PRICE OF ALUMINUM IN THE UNITED STATES
AND ON THE LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Cents per pound)

Period	Midwest U.S. market price	LME cash price Grade A
2011:		
February	119.438	113.752
March	121.800	115.767
April	128.313	120.762
May	126.063	117.558
June	124.350	115.896
July	121.625	113.926
August	116.563	108.508
September	112.400	104.160
October	105.875	98.515
November	102.563	94.038
December	98.150	91.694
January–December	116.121	108.768
2012:		
January	103.375	97.244 ^r
February	107.000	99.953
January–February	105.188	98.599

^rRevised.

TABLE 7
AVERAGE BUYING PRICES FOR ALUMINUM SCRAP

(Cents per pound)

Month	Used beverage cans	Mixed low copper clips	Old sheet and cast	Turnings (clean and dry)
2011:				
February	89.11	85.34	79.95	78.08
March	90.96	87.07	81.96	81.00
April	96.07	87.19	82.83 ¹	81.93
May	94.71	86.10	80.69 ¹	79.31
June	94.05	84.50	79.30 ¹	79.11
July	90.95	84.55	79.43 ¹	79.00
August	86.54	83.91	77.56 ¹	76.87
September	83.07	80.64	74.27 ¹	73.64
October	78.07	74.88	70.13 ¹	68.90
November	76.63	73.85	69.10 ¹	68.60
December	73.18	73.03	69.01 ¹	68.13
January–December	86.68	81.94	76.73	75.68
2012:				
January	77.30	75.60	71.63 ¹	69.88
February	79.83	77.93	74.73 ¹	72.88
January–February	78.57	76.77	73.18	71.38

¹Beginning in April 2011, old sheet and old cast were reported separately. The average of the two prices is presented in this table.

Source: American Metal Market.

TABLE 8
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ALUMINUM IN JANUARY 2012¹

(Metric tons)

Country or territory	Metals and alloys, crude	Plates, sheets, bars, etc.	Scrap	Total
Argentina	9,460	--	--	9,460
Australia	141	6	--	147
Austria	--	1,590	--	1,590
Bahamas, The	--	--	218	218
Bahrain	194	2,440	--	2,630
Belgium	55	109	--	164
Brazil	4	1,170	--	1,170
Canada	162,000	26,700	31,900	221,000
Chile	--	--	300	300
China	90	5,650	24	5,760
Colombia	--	136	--	136
Costa Rica	--	--	242	242
Egypt	--	189	--	189
El Salvador	--	15	314	329
France	479	100	--	579
Germany	5	5,910	7	5,920
Greece	--	1,220	--	1,220
Guatemala	--	--	1,280	1,280
Honduras	--	--	199	199
Hong Kong	--	245	--	245
India	(2)	1,420	--	1,420
Indonesia	--	7,220	--	7,220
Italy	122	226	53	401
Japan	--	351	256	607
Korea, Republic of	678	241	--	919
Malaysia	--	440	--	440
Mexico	5,010	2,390	9,190	16,600
New Zealand	371	2	--	373
Qatar	14,500	--	--	14,500
Romania	11	773	61	845
Russia	48,600	1,580	--	50,200
Saudi Arabia	--	--	1,250	1,250
South Africa	23	6,090	--	6,120
Sweden	--	246	--	246
Switzerland	27	176	--	203
Taiwan	--	733	--	733
Tajikistan	10,500	--	--	10,500
United Arab Emirates	20,200	(2)	22	20,200
United Kingdom	45	462	270	777
Venezuela	8,100	--	328	8,420
Other	438	1,870	3,990	6,300
Total	281,000	69,700	49,900	401,000

-- Zero.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 9
U.S. EXPORTS OF ALUMINUM IN JANUARY 2012¹

(Metric tons)

Country or territory	Metals and alloys, crude	Plates, sheets, bars, etc.	Scrap	Total
Australia	39	178	--	217
Belgium	9	339	--	348
Brazil	9	521	192	722
Canada	8,400	33,500	9,120	51,100
Chile	502	3	3	508
China	533	2,150	104,000	106,000
Colombia	501	199	17	717
France	194	1,110	--	1,310
Germany	146	1,280	111	1,540
Guatemala	--	1,530	--	1,530
Hong Kong	(2)	89	2,040	2,130
India	45	81	3,900	4,030
Indonesia	--	118	358	476
Ireland	7	125	--	132
Israel	92	658	--	750
Italy	27	285	--	312
Japan	52	1,400	994	2,440
Jordan	--	489	--	489
Korea, Republic of	8	1,050	15,100	16,100
Kuwait	--	346	--	346
Malaysia	--	243	360	603
Mexico	19,600	23,800	10,300	53,700
Netherlands	4	57	157	218
New Zealand	(2)	566	1	567
Norway	--	(2)	95	95
Pakistan	--	2	1,140	1,140
Panama	--	353	--	353
Romania	6	15	--	21
Saudi Arabia	--	5,860	--	5,860
Singapore	93	356	41	490
Spain	--	95	--	95
Taiwan	292	1,010	7,570	8,870
Thailand	--	172	338	510
Tunisia	--	55	--	55
Turkey	--	243	--	243
United Arab Emirates	--	449	77	526
United Kingdom	130	1,760	107	1,990
Vietnam	--	8	336	344
Other	144	1,060	525	1,730
Total	30,800	81,600	157,000	269,000

-- Zero.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.