

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

E. Lee Bray, Aluminum Commodity Specialist
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-4979, Fax: (703) 648-7757
E-mail: lbray@usgs.gov

Annie Hwang (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7952
Fax: (703) 648-7995
E-mail: ahwang@usgs.gov

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

ALUMINUM IN MAY 2012

Domestic primary aluminum production in May 2012 was 179,000 metric tons (t). The average daily production was 5,780 t, essentially the same as that during the previous month but 6% higher than that for May 2011.

Total aluminum recovered from scrap in May 2012 was 298,000 t, 5% more than the amount recovered in the previous month and 15% more than the amount recovered in May 2011. Of this, 156,000 t of aluminum was recovered from new scrap, 3% more than the amount in the previous month and 14% more than the amount in May 2011. Aluminum recovered from old scrap in May 2012 totaled 143,000 t, 7% more than the amount in April and 16% more than the amount in May 2011.

Update

Ormet Corp. announced it would shut down one potline at its 270,000-metric-ton-per-year (t/yr) smelter in Hannibal, OH, by mid-August. High power prices and low aluminum prices were cited for the shutdown of the 45,000-t/yr potline (Waite, 2012b).

Alcoa Inc. resumed production on June 15 from the casthouse at the 135,000-t/yr West Smelting Plant at Massena, NY. Production from the casthouse was halted after a fire on March 29, and repairs were delayed because of the discovery of asbestos. (See Aluminum in March 2012.) Primary aluminum production at the smelter was not affected (Waite, 2012a).

An agreement between the union representing about 750 employees at the 438,000-t/yr Alma smelter at Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Quebec, Canada, and Rio Tinto Alcan Inc. was ratified on July 5. Ratification of the new contract ended the labor dispute and employee lockout that had shut down two-

thirds of the smelter's capacity since January 1 when the prior contract expired (See Aluminum in February 2012.) Restarting the idled capacity commenced when the employees returned to work (Rio Tinto plc, 2012, p. 5).

Norsk Hydro ASA announced that the Kurri Kurri smelter in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, would be closed by the end of August. One of the three potlines at the 180,000-t/yr smelter had been shut down in February. Low prices and demand for aluminum, uncertainty in the market, and the strong Australian currency were cited for the shutdown (Norsk Hydro ASA, 2012).

The monthly average U.S. market price of primary aluminum ingot continued to decline to \$0.954 per pound in June, down from \$1.001 per pound in May.

References Cited

- Norsk Hydro ASA, 2012, Hydro will close the Kurri Kurri aluminium plant: Oslo, Norway, Norsk Hydro ASA news release, June 5. (Accessed June 5, 2012, at <http://www.hydro.com/en/Press-room/News/Archive/Stock-exchange-announcements/2012/Hydro-will-close-the-Kurri-Kurri-aluminium-plant/>.)
- Rio Tinto plc, 2012, Second quarter 2012 operations review: London, United Kingdom, Rio Tinto plc media release, July 17, 25 p. (Accessed July 20, 2012, at http://www.riotinto.com/documents/PR969g_Second_quarter_2012_operations_review.pdf.)
- Waite, Suzy, 2012a, Alcoa restarts cast rod output in NY: American Metal Market, v. 119, no. 25-5, June 22, p. 9.
- Waite, Suzy, 2012b, Ormet to begin idling potline at Ohio smelter: American Metal Market, v. 119, no. 30-1, July 23, p. 1, 7.

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 ^p	1,986	1,630	1,410	3,040	2,830	880	3,710	8,740	1,060
2011:									
January–May	784	677 ^r	572 ^r	1,250 ^r	1,160	343	1,500	3,540	1,100
May	170	136	123	258	285	73	358	787	1,100
June	167	136	122	258	263	74	337	762	1,090
July	171	135	120	256	220	70	290	717	1,110
August	172	148	123	271	241	85	327	770	1,090
September	169	138	122	260	263	86	349	778	1,080
October	175	141	123	263	243	78	321	759	1,060
November	171	129	116	245	192	74	266	683	1,050
December	177	126	114	240	245	70	315	732	1,060
2012:									
January	178	146	125	272	281	70	351	801	1,090
February	167	147	131	278	284	77	360	805	1,060
March	179	155	139	293	248	83	332	804	1,060
April	174	151	133	284	231	78	309	767	1,090
May	179	156	143	298	293	82	376	853	NA
January–May	878	754	670	1,430	1,340	390	1,730	4,030	NA

^pPreliminary. ^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 ^p	2,210	1,646	1,474	1,338	61	53	8	8	3,750
2011:										
January–May	898 ^r	666 ^r	614	558	25	22	3	3	1,540 ^r	1,250 ^r
May	186	137	128	116	5	4	1	1	320	258
June	186	139	126	114	5	4	1	1	318	258
July	185	138	124	113	5	4	1	1	315	256
August	192	144	134	122	5	4	1	1	332	271
September	187	140	127	115	5	4	1	1	320	260
October	192	143	127	115	5	4	1	1	324	263
November	186	138	113	102	5	4	1	1	304	245
December	184	136	109	99	5	4	1	1	299	240
2012:										
January	209	151	128	116	5	4	1	1	343	272
February	213	156	129	117	5	4	1	1	347	278
March	217	159	143	130	5	4	1	1	366	293
April	218	158	129	117	10	9	1	1	357	284
May	215	157	146	133	10	9	1	1	372	298
January–May	1,070	779	676	612	35	31	3	3	1,790	1,430

^pPreliminary. ^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 MAY 2012¹

(Metric tons)

	Consumption		Calculated metallic recovery	
	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage
	Secondary smelters	179,000	215,000	130,000
Independent mill fabricators	133,000	146,000	120,000	133,000
Foundries	8,110	9,730	7,180	8,610
Other consumers	482	579	481	577
Total	321,000	372,000	258,000	298,000

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 MAY 2012¹

(Metric tons)

	May			January–May ²		
	Stocks, opening ²	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed	Stocks, closing	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed
New scrap:						
Extrusion	18,900	42,000	41,500	19,300	199,000	199,000
Can stock clippings	24,100	26,900	25,800	25,300	118,000	117,000
Other wrought sheet/clippings	8,230	39,200	38,900	8,530	189,000	194,000
Casting	2,350	5,610	5,620	2,330	27,800	27,900
Borings and turnings	4,240	12,400	12,200	4,420	56,500	56,300
Dross and skimmings	16,300	54,200	54,200	16,300	273,000	273,000
Total new scrap	74,200	180,000	178,000	76,200	864,000	868,000
Old scrap:						
Used castings	5,010	29,800	29,600	5,240	127,000	128,000
Used extrusion	6,430	13,700	12,800	7,310	65,800	67,500
Used cans (shredded, loose, baled)	31,000	66,100	67,000	30,100	306,000	306,000
Other wrought products	10,700	25,300	24,800	11,200	131,000	129,000
Fragmentized shredder (auto shredder)	1,590	8,200	8,240	1,550	39,200	39,000
Total old scrap	54,700	143,000	142,000	55,400	669,000	670,000
Sweated pig	55	33	33	55	163	163
Total all classes	129,000	323,000	321,000	132,000	1,530,000	1,540,000

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 MAY 2012^{1,2}

(Metric tons)

	May			January–May ³		
	Stocks, opening ³	Production	Net shipments	Stocks, closing	Production	Net shipments
Die-cast alloys:						
13% Si, 360, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	3,090	3,840	3,990	2,930	20,100	20,000
380 and variations	10,500	19,800	19,800	10,500	98,900	98,900
Sand and permanent mold:						
95/5 Al-Si, 356, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	1,900	4,240	4,240	1,900	21,200	21,200
No. 319 and variations	3,630	5,630	5,660	3,610	28,400	28,300
F-132 alloy and variations	450	439	439	450	2,190	2,190
Al-Zn alloys	99	143	143	99	714	714
Al-Si alloys (0.6% to 2.0% Cu)	111	292	292	111	1,460	1,460
Al-Cu alloys (1.5% Si, max.)	170	162	162	170	811	811
Other ⁴	1,800	9,850	8,240	3,410	47,400	46,100
Wrought alloys, extrusion billets	16,100	42,300	42,400	16,000	213,000	213,000
Total all alloys	37,900	86,700	85,300	39,200	434,000	432,000
Less:						
Primary aluminum consumed	XX	10,800	XX	XX	59,800	XX
Primary silicon consumed	XX	2,090	XX	XX	10,400	XX
Other alloying ingredients consumed	XX	1,710	XX	XX	7,330	XX
Net metallic recovery from aluminum scrap and sweated pig consumed in production of secondary aluminum ingot ⁵	XX	72,100	XX	XX	356,000	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:		
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
February	107.000	99.953
March	107.900	99.002
April	101.563	92.815
May	100.100	90.727
January–May	103.988	95.948

TABLE 7
 AVERAGE BUYING PRICES FOR ALUMINUM SCRAP

(Cents per pound)

Month	Used beverage cans	Mixed low copper clips	Old sheet	Old cast	Turnings (clean and dry)
2011:					
May	94.71	86.10	80.14	81.24	79.31
June	94.05	84.50	79.00	79.59	79.11
July	90.95	84.55	78.15	80.70	79.00
August	86.54	83.91	76.52	78.59	76.87
September	83.07	80.64	73.14	75.40	73.64
October	78.07	74.88	69.19	71.07	68.90
November	76.63	73.85	67.90	70.30	68.60
December	73.18	73.03	67.76	70.26	68.13
January–December	86.68	81.94	65.76 ¹	67.46 ¹	75.68
2012:					
January	77.30	75.60	70.98	72.28	69.88
February	79.83	77.93	73.60	75.85	72.88
March	79.86	78.41	74.14	76.36	73.66
April	75.65	76.65	73.50	72.65	76.05
May	74.27	74.89	72.91	73.25	75.73
January–May	77.38	76.70	73.03	74.08	73.64

¹Average price for April–December; prices for January through March were not available.

Source: American Metal Market.

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

(Metric tons)

Country or territory	Metals and alloys, crude		Plates, sheets, bars, etc.		Scrap		Total	
	May	January– May	May	January– May	May	January– May	May	January– May
Argentina	8,580	19,200	1	2	--	--	8,580	19,200
Australia	100	8,700	1	27	--	21	101	8,750
Austria	--	(2)	2,040	10,100	--	2	2,040	10,100
Bahamas, The	--	--	--	--	262	1,230	262	1,230
Bahrain	4,140	7,130	1,640	9,480	14	14	5,790	16,600
Belgium	98	357	209	891	37	115	344	1,360
Brazil	340	4,390	1,250	8,260	2,540	2,540	4,140	15,200
Canada	167,000	858,000	31,100	151,000	29,900	147,000	228,000	1,160,000
Chile	--	--	--	--	566	1,740	566	1,740
China	98	722	10,800	41,100	--	65	10,900	41,900
Colombia	288	690	215	887	161	335	664	1,910
Costa Rica	--	346	--	1	294	1,600	294	1,950
Egypt	--	--	356	1,670	--	--	356	1,670
El Salvador	60	60	10	25	209	1,330	279	1,420
France	671	1,910	674	1,900	--	5	1,350	3,820
Germany	79	164	6,420	32,200	--	85	6,500	32,500
Greece	--	--	1,240	6,660	--	18	1,240	6,680
Guatemala	--	60	--	--	1,110	5,650	1,110	5,710
Honduras	--	--	--	--	185	1,070	185	1,070
Hong Kong	--	--	606	2,020	--	--	606	2,020
India	297	1,730	1,340	6,500	--	6	1,640	8,230
Indonesia	--	--	8,240	39,900	--	--	8,240	39,900
Italy	318	3,400	594	1,740	41	223	953	5,370
Japan	(2)	25	313	1,830	12	557	325	2,410
Korea, Republic of	203	4,470	322	1,480	72	186	597	6,130
Malaysia	63	63	400	1,760	--	--	463	1,820
Mexico	4,680	24,500	2,500	11,900	11,600	50,700	18,800	87,100
New Zealand	1,270	7,500	1	5	--	20	1,280	7,530
Qatar	16,000	70,600	--	--	--	--	16,000	70,600
Romania	33	145	1,290	4,530	159	625	1,480	5,300
Russia	39,200	150,000	1,070	6,540	--	--	40,200	157,000
Saudi Arabia	70	143	--	--	1,700	8,960	1,770	9,100
South Africa	45	2,050	5,560	29,100	--	--	5,610	31,100
Sweden	--	11	243	1,740	--	--	243	1,750
Switzerland	(2)	51	255	1,000	--	--	255	1,060
Taiwan	3	3	450	2,460	--	--	453	2,460
Tajikistan	3,450	13,900	--	--	--	--	3,450	13,900
United Arab Emirates	32,200	115,000	--	11	59	197	32,300	115,000
United Kingdom	46	263	1,250	4,400	275	1,130	1,570	5,800
Venezuela	11,900	38,200	179	397	68	1,860	12,100	40,500
Other	1,530	3,810	1,770	8,120	1,230	15,100	4,530	27,000
Total	293,000	1,340,000	82,400	390,000	50,500	242,000	426,000	1,970,000

-- 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 MAY 2012¹

(Metric tons)

Country or territory	Metals and alloys, crude		Plates, sheets, bars, etc.		Scrap		Total	
	May	January–	May	January–	May	January–	May	January–
		May		May		May		May
Australia	--	104	231	839	--	--	231	943
Belgium	9	23	532	1,950	172	209	713	2,180
Brazil	7	35	993	4,880	244	1,600	1,240	6,510
Canada	8,440	42,100	35,600	174,000	9,330	47,500	53,400	263,000
Chile	--	1,430	853	3,810	18	21	871	5,260
China	403	1,970	2,800	14,500	121,000	584,000	124,000	601,000
Colombia	(2)	502	134	886	--	45	134	1,430
France	159	1,390	2,030	7,950	29	56	2,220	9,390
Germany	218	1,190	904	5,270	--	251	1,120	6,710
Guatemala	--	6	1,270	5,890	11	38	1,280	5,930
Hong Kong	27	51	175	763	2,230	15,400	2,430	16,200
India	(2)	147	234	851	6,200	24,400	6,430	25,400
Indonesia	8	14	354	1,160	438	2,330	800	3,500
Ireland	1	18	67	318	--	--	68	336
Israel	144	504	557	3,370	--	--	701	3,870
Italy	2	32	299	1,550	--	20	301	1,600
Japan	25	550	2,070	7,750	1,010	5,300	3,100	13,600
Jordan	--	--	1,400	2,910	--	--	1,400	2,910
Korea, Republic of	47	209	1,740	8,140	14,900	84,600	16,700	92,900
Kuwait	--	--	671	2,070	--	--	671	2,070
Malaysia	--	2	266	1,320	798	2,020	1,060	3,340
Mexico	21,100	100,000	32,200	136,000	11,200	59,400	64,500	296,000
Netherlands	7	23	137	467	143	491	287	981
New Zealand	4	14	101	1,390	--	2	105	1,410
Norway	--	--	47	82	133	420	180	502
Pakistan	--	--	(2)	4	4,540	13,900	4,540	13,900
Panama	1	1	367	1,800	--	4	368	1,810
Romania	112	273	42	103	--	--	154	376
Saudi Arabia	1	1	6,180	25,500	--	--	6,180	25,500
Singapore	108	484	252	1,770	11	153	371	2,410
Spain	--	7	154	630	--	36	154	673
Taiwan	39	847	693	4,110	6,220	30,800	6,950	35,800
Thailand	--	1	18	459	770	2,590	788	3,050
Tunisia	--	--	259	565	--	--	259	565
Turkey	1	4	183	1,090	--	--	184	1,090
United Arab Emirates	--	1	1,930	3,750	--	116	1,930	3,870
United Kingdom	70	477	1,490	8,220	6	255	1,570	8,960
Vietnam	--	--	12	86	197	1,730	209	1,820
Other	36	660	2,220	6,180	88	1,180	2,350	8,010
Total	31,000	153,000	99,400	442,000	179,000	879,000	310,000	1,470,000

-- 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.