

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

E. Lee Bray, Bauxite 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

Monica D. Zeigler (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7981
Fax: (703) 648-7975
E-mail: mdzeigler@usgs.gov

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

BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE SECOND QUARTER 2009

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the second quarter of 2009 were 1.4 million metric tons (Mt), 20% lower than those in the first quarter of 2009 and 47% lower than those in the second quarter of 2008, reflecting the continued downturn in domestic alumina production. Jamaica (38%), Guinea (35%), and Brazil (21%) were the principal sources of imports in the second quarter of 2009. Imports from Brazil and Jamaica, which declined by 37% and 29%, respectively, from those in the first quarter, accounted for most of the decline in imports but were partially offset by a 64% increase in imports from Guinea.

Imports of alumina during the second quarter of 2009 were 435,000 metric tons (t), 38% lower than those in the first quarter 2009 and 36% lower than those in the second quarter of 2008. Domestic aluminum smelters closed approximately 720,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of capacity during the first half of 2009, accounting for the decline in demand for imported alumina and bauxite. The leading sources of imported alumina during the second quarter of 2009 were Australia (34%), Suriname (33%), and Brazil (18%). Imports from Jamaica, Australia, and Brazil decreased by 84%, 47%, and 31%, respectively, compared with those of the prior quarter, accounting for most of the net decrease of alumina imports during the second quarter of 2009.

Exports of alumina during the second quarter of 2009 were 241,000 t, 25% higher than those in the first quarter of 2009 and 23% lower than those in the second quarter of 2008. The leading destinations of alumina exported during the second quarter of 2009 were Canada (29%), France (25%), Iceland (23%), and Norway (11%). Exports of alumina to Iceland decreased by 39% during the second quarter of 2009 but were offset by increased exports to France and Norway.

Century Aluminum Co. (Monterey, CA) sold its 50% share of Gramercy Alumina LLC to Noranda Aluminum Corp. (Franklin, TN), which owned the other 50% of Gramercy Alumina. The assets include a 1.2-million-metric-ton-per-year (Mt/yr) alumina refinery in Gramercy, LA, and a 4.8-Mt/yr bauxite mine at St. Ann, Jamaica. Noranda announced that it would increase production at the mine and refinery to full capacity beginning in September (Noranda Aluminum Corp., 2009).

Suriname Aluminum Co., a subsidiary of Alcoa World Alumina and Chemicals, purchased BHP Billiton's 45% share of their joint venture in Suriname. The joint venture included a 2.2-Mt/yr refinery at Paranam and several bauxite mines (Alcoa Inc., 2009).

Update

An expansion of the Alumar refinery in Brazil that increased capacity to 3.5 Mt/yr from 1.5 Mt/yr was completed in July. The refinery was expected to operate at full capacity during the second half of 2009. The Alumar refinery was a joint venture between Alcoa (54%), BHP Billiton (36%), and Rio Tinto Alcan (10%) (BHP Billiton Ltd., 2009).

References Cited

- Alcoa Inc., 2009, Alcoa completes deal to acquire bauxite and alumina interests in Suriname: New York, NY, Alcoa Inc. news release, July 31, 1 p.
- BHP Billiton Ltd., 2009, BHP Billiton announces first production from the Alumar alumina refinery expansion project: Melbourne, Australia, BHP Billiton Ltd. news release, July 9, 1 p.
- Noranda Aluminum Corp., 2009, Noranda to increase production at Gramercy and St. Ann facilities: Franklin, TN, Noranda Aluminum Corp. news release, September 2, 1 p.

TABLE 1
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CRUDE AND DRIED BAUXITE¹

(Metric tons)

Country	2008	2009		
		First quarter	Second quarter	Year to date
Imports (for consumption):				
Brazil	1,940,000	456,000	288,000	745,000
Guinea	2,350,000	298,000	488,000	786,000
Guyana	723,000	62,700	5,890	68,600
Jamaica	4,430,000	755,000	540,000	1,290,000
Sierra Leone	779,000	115,000	77,800	192,000
Other	260,000	64,900	2,270	67,200
Total	10,500,000	1,750,000	1,400,000	3,150,000
Exports:				
Canada	8,140	1,160	2,170	3,330
Nigeria	--	--	224	224
South Africa	--	--	617	617
Ireland	2,880	--	--	--
Other	3,210 ^r	361 ^r	608	969
Total	14,200	1,520	3,620	5,140

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CALCINED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY¹

(Metric tons)

Country	2008		2009					
			First quarter		Second quarter		Year to date	
	Refractory	Other	Refractory	Other	Refractory	Other	Refractory	Other
Imports (for consumption):								
Australia	--	162,000	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brazil	125,000	27,000	39,100	--	29,900	1,380	69,000	1,380
China	177,000	66,100	10,200	9,240	--	--	10,200	9,240
Dominican Republic	--	46,100	--	--	--	--	--	--
Greece	28,200	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Guyana	38,600	305,000	2,850	41,700	7,310	46,400	10,200	88,100
Jamaica	--	95,300	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	1,330	36,400	--	122	--	479	--	601
Total	370,000	738,000	52,200	51,100	37,200	48,300	89,400	99,300
Exports:								
Canada	6,530	129	2,530	--	784	463	3,320	463
Italy	--	177	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	1,240	378	713	528	148	--	861	528
Other	809	131	154	1	31	--	185	1
Total	8,580	815	3,400	529	963	463	4,360	992

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF ALUMINA¹

(Metric tons, calcined equivalent)

Country	2008	2009		Year to date
		First quarter	Second quarter	
Imports (for consumption):²				
Australia	930,000	283,000	150,000	432,000
Brazil	523,000	111,000	77,100	189,000
Jamaica	468,000	163,000	26,300	189,000
Suriname	264,000	105,000	146,000	250,000
Venezuela	154,000	--	--	--
Other	195,000	40,200	36,900	77,100
Total	2,530,000	702,000	435,000	1,140,000
Exports:³				
Canada	629,000	73,500	69,100	143,000
France	2,120	446	60,500	61,000
Iceland	311,000	92,400	56,400	149,000
Mexico	54,400	9,940	13,100	23,000
Netherlands	27,700	1,070	332	1,400
Norway	34,500	54	26,900	27,000
Other	90,500 ^r	15,300 ^r	14,400	29,600
Total	1,150,000	193,000	241,000	433,000

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²Includes imports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 201,000 tons in 2008; 48,300 tons in the first quarter of 2009; 46,600 tons in the second quarter of 2009.

³Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 76,600 tons in 2008; 13,700 tons in the first quarter of 2009; 17,400 tons in the second quarter of 2009.