

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2015

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the first quarter of 2015 were 2.76 million metric tons (Mt), slightly less than those in the fourth quarter of 2014 and the first quarter of 2014 (fig. 1). Jamaica (45%), Brazil (32%), and Guinea (19%) were the leading sources of crude dry bauxite imports in the first quarter of 2015. Imports of crude and dried bauxite from Brazil during the first quarter of 2015 increased by 17% compared with those in the fourth quarter of 2014. This increase was offset by a 22% decline in imports from Guinea.

Exports of alumina during the first quarter of 2015 were 421,000 t, 19% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2014 and 32% less than those in the first quarter of 2014 (fig. 2). The leading destinations of alumina exported during the first quarter of 2015 were Canada (42%), Egypt (22%), and Norway (17%). Decreased alumina exports to Egypt of 32,300 t, Iceland of 32,000 t, Norway of 28,100 t, and Russia of 23,700 t accounted for most of the decrease in alumina exports compared with those in the fourth quarter of 2014, but were partially offset by increased alumina exports to Canada of 16,400 t.

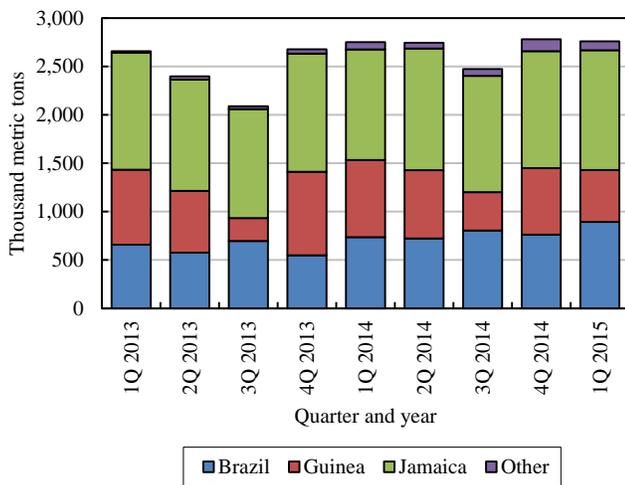


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the first quarter of 2015 were 501,000 metric tons (t), 46% more than those in the fourth quarter of 2014 and 11% more than those in the first quarter of 2014 (fig. 2). The leading sources of imported alumina during the first quarter of 2015 were Australia (48%), Suriname (20%), and Brazil (16%). Increased alumina imports from Australia of 98,900 t and Brazil of 59,700 t accounted for most of the increase in alumina imports compared with those in the fourth quarter of 2014.

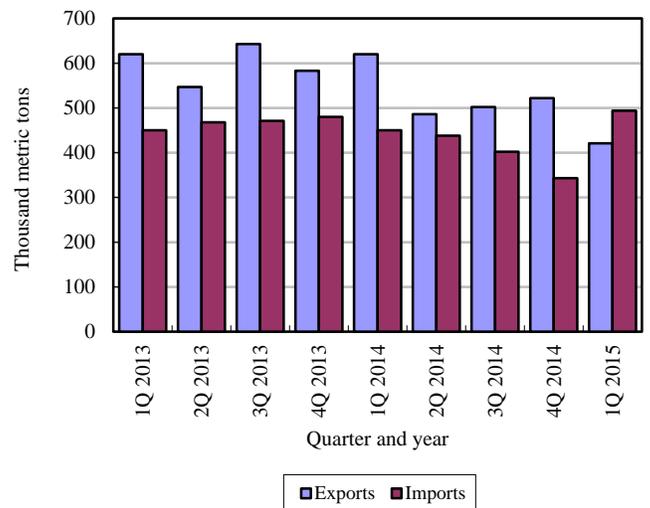


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

The labor dispute between Sherwin Alumina Co. LLC, a subsidiary of Glencore International Ltd., and 450 employees represented by the United Steelworkers union continued at the 1.65-million-metric-ton-per-year (Mt/yr) alumina refinery in Gregory, TX. On October 11, 2014, the company instituted a worker lockout after the employees rejected a contract offer. Production from the alumina refinery continued by management

employees and temporary workers. (See Bauxite and Alumina in the Fourth Quarter 2014.) Glencore reported that alumina production from the refinery in the first quarter of 2015 was 3% more than that in the fourth quarter of 2014 but 22% less than that of the same quarter in 2014. The temporary shutdown of one of the five production units in June 2014 ahead of the lockout was cited for the decreased production compared with that of the same period in 2014 (Glencore International Ltd., 2015, p. 8, 17; Lim, 2015b).

In April, Alcoa Inc. shut down 443,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of capacity at its 2.2 Mt/yr alumina refinery in Paranam, Suriname. After the shutdown, 881,000 t/yr of capacity was still operating. Limited energy supplies, declining bauxite reserves, and low alumina prices were cited for the shutdown. Alcoa was selling the Paranam refinery, bauxite mine, and a hydroelectric plant to the Government of Suriname in a deal that was expected to be completed by July (Alcoa Inc., 2015; Lim, 2015a).

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- Glencore International Ltd., 2015, First quarter 2015 production report: Baar, Switzerland, Glencore International Ltd. news release, May 5, 19 p. (Accessed June 8, at http://www.glencore.com/assets/investors/doc/reports_and_results/2015/GLEN-2015-Q1-Production-Report.pdf.)
- Lim, Joanna, 2015a, Alcoa to cut Suriname alumina refining capacity by April 30: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 54, March 18, p. 4–5.
- Lim, Joanna, 2015b, US Sherwin's Q1 alumina output falls 22% year on year: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 87, May 5, p. 4.

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

(Metric tons)

Country	2014				1st quarter– 4th quarter	2015 1st quarter
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter		
Imports (for consumption):						
Brazil	736,000	722,000	805,000	762,000	3,030,000	894,000
Guinea	798,000	707,000	396,000	687,000	2,590,000	536,000
Jamaica ²	1,140,000	1,260,000	1,200,000	1,210,000	4,810,000	1,240,000
Other	74,700	58,800	71,200	123,000	327,000	91,100
Total	2,750,000	2,750,000	2,470,000	2,780,000	10,800,000	2,760,000
Exports:						
Canada	478	686	559	593	2,320	1,030
Mexico	21	651	--	--	672	--
Other	119	116	78	159	472	51
Total	618	1,450	637	752	3,460	1,080

-- Zero.

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

²Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

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	2014											
	1st quarter		2d quarter		3d quarter		4th quarter		1st quarter– 4th quarter		2015 1st quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports (for consumption):												
Australia	--	50,800	--	31,400	--	72,000	--	23,900	--	178,000	--	--
Brazil	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	45,000	--	45,000	--	--
China	7,780	1,540	21,900	4,280	17,300	3,870	31,500	4,830	78,500	14,500	25,900	2,580
Greece	--	39,800	--	45,700	--	24,000	--	--	--	109,000	--	--
Guyana	--	5,270	--	5,630	11,300	58,000	6,300	59,200	17,600	128,000	12,700	44,700
Other	40	221	122	320	--	185	28,100	376	28,200	1,100	141	837,000
Total	7,820	97,600	22,000	87,300	28,600	158,000	65,800	133,000	124,000	476,000	38,800	884,000
Exports:												
Canada	2,000	--	1,400	--	1,320	--	777	--	5,490	--	1,830	--
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Malaysia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	171	140	133	--	67	498	159	64	530	702	105	64
United Arab Emirates	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	401	67	144	--	258	1	480	3	1,280	71	168	2
Total	2,570	207	1,670	--	1,650	499	1,420	67	7,310	773	2,100	66

-- 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	2014				1st quarter–	2015
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter
Imports (for consumption):²						
Australia	189,000	191,000	96,200	142,000	617,000	241,000
Brazil	62,300	62,800	70,900	19,900	216,000	79,600
Jamaica ³	8,520	--	--	2,230	10,700	9,510
Suriname	150,000	136,000	154,000	97,600	536,000	98,000
Venezuela	--	--	26,200	44,000	70,300	34,500
Other	40,800	49,200	54,600	37,600	182,000	39,000
Total	450,000	438,000	402,000	343,000	1,630,000	501,000
Exports:⁴						
Canada	134,000	110,000	204,000	159,000	607,000	175,000
China	46,200	13,500	1,970	11,200	72,900	1,040
Egypt	123,000	94,000	60,500	123,000	400,000	90,700
Georgia	31,100	55,200	(⁵)	65	86,300	--
Iceland	117,000	65,700	58,000	32,000	273,000	--
Mexico	27,100	25,300	26,600	22,800	102,000	15,000
Norway	95,000	71,200	91,300	99,600	357,000	71,500
Russia	31,800	559	30,500	23,900	86,800	216
Other	15,200	50,600	28,800	51,000	146,000	67,600
Total	620,000	486,000	502,000	522,000	2,130,000	421,000

-- 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: 211,000 metric tons (t) in 2014; 29,800 t in the first quarter of 2015.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 128,000 t in 2014; 25,600 t in the first quarter of 2015.

⁵Less than ½ unit.

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