

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE SECOND QUARTER 2015

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the second quarter of 2015 were 2.42 million metric tons (Mt), 12% less than those in the first quarter of 2015 and the second quarter of 2014 (fig. 1). Jamaica (49%), Brazil (33%), and Guinea (18%) were the leading sources of crude dry bauxite imports in the second quarter of 2015. Imports of crude and dried bauxite from Brazil, Guinea, and Jamaica during the second quarter of 2015 decreased by 12%, 18%, and 4%, respectively, compared with those in the first quarter of 2015.

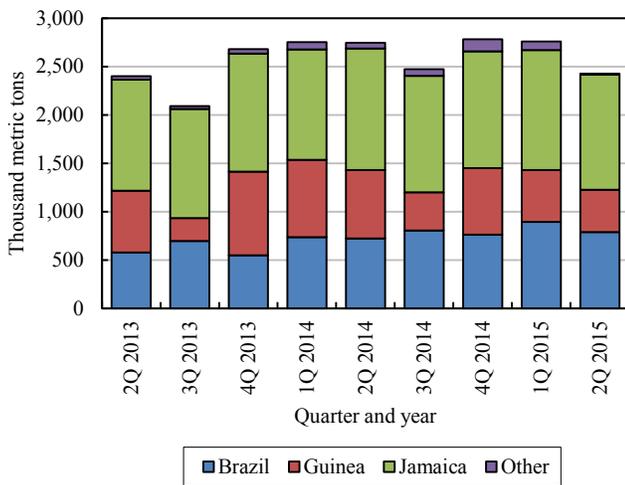


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the second quarter of 2015 were 395,000 metric tons (t), 21% less than those in the first quarter of 2015 and 10% less than those in the second quarter of 2014 (fig. 2). The leading sources of imported alumina during the second quarter of 2015 were Australia (37%), Brazil (24%), and Suriname (16%). Decreased alumina imports from Australia of 96,300 t and Suriname of 34,200 t accounted for most of the decrease in alumina imports compared with those in the first quarter of 2015.

Exports of alumina during the second quarter of 2015 were 557,000 t, 32% more than those in the first quarter of 2015 and 15% more than those in the second quarter of 2014 (fig. 2). The leading destinations for alumina exported during the second quarter of 2015 were Canada (38%), Egypt (22%), and Norway (16%). Increased alumina exports to Canada of 37,300 t, Egypt of 30,000 t, Iceland of 63,000 t, and Norway of 19,000 t accounted for most of the increase in alumina exports compared with those in the first quarter of 2015, but were partially offset by decreased alumina exports to other destinations of 23,100 t.

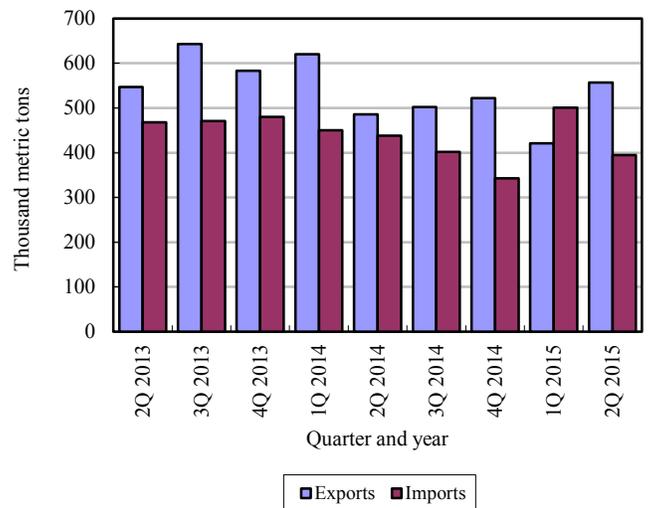


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

The labor dispute between Sherwin Alumina Co. LLC, a subsidiary of Glencore International Ltd., and 450 employees represented by the United Steelworkers (USW) union continued at the 1.65-million-metric-ton-per-year alumina refinery in Gregory, TX. On October 11, 2014, the company instituted a worker lockout after the employees rejected a contract offer. In May 2015, the regional director of the National Labor Relations

Board upheld the legality of the lockout, but the USW filed an appeal in June. Contract issues including health care benefits for retirees, overtime rules, pensions, and wages remained unresolved. 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 second quarter of 2015 was 6% less than that in the first quarter of 2015 and 28% less than that of the same quarter in 2014. Production in the first half of 2015 was 25% less than that in the first half of 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; Matyi, 2015; United Steelworkers, 2015).

Almatis GmbH was sold by Dubai International Capital to OYAK, Turkey's largest private pension fund. Almatis owns the 500,000-metric-ton-per-year Burnside, LA, alumina refinery that produces specialty alumina for the ceramic, polishing, and refractory industries (Almatis GmbH, 2015).

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- Glencore International Ltd., 2015, 2015 half-year production report: Baar, Switzerland, Glencore International Ltd. news release, August 13, 20 p. (Accessed September 2, 2015, at <http://www.glencore.com/media/news/GLEN-2015-Q2-ProductionReport.pdf>)
- Matyi, Bob, 2015, USW to appeal NLRB ruling on Sherwin Alumina lockout: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 116, June 16, p. 4–5.
- United Steelworkers, 2015, USW will appeal NLRB regional director's decision: United Steelworkers press release, May 12. (Accessed September 2, 2015, at <http://www.usw.org/news/media-center/articles/2015/usw-will-appeal-nlr-regional-directors-decision>.)

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

(Metric tons)

Country	2014	2015		
		1st quarter	2d quarter	1st quarter– 2d quarter
Imports (for consumption):				
Brazil	3,030,000	894,000	788,000	1,680,000
Guinea	2,590,000	536,000	439,000	975,000
Jamaica ²	4,810,000	1,240,000	1,190,000	2,420,000
Other	327,000	91,100	10,200	101,000
Total	10,800,000	2,760,000	2,420,000	5,180,000
Exports:				
Canada	2,320	1,030	585	1,620
Mexico	672	--	--	--
Other	472	51	28	79
Total	3,460	1,080	613	1,700

-- 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	2015							
	2014		1st quarter		2d quarter		1st quarter– 2d quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports (for consumption):								
Australia	--	178,000	--	--	--	31,400	--	31,400
Brazil	--	45,000	--	--	40	--	40	--
China	78,500	14,500	25,900	2,580	16,100	2,900	42,000	5,480
Greece	--	109,000	--	--	--	45,700	--	45,700
Guyana	17,600	128,000	12,700	44,700	10,800	74,300	23,500	119,000
Other	28,200	1,100	141	343 [†]	15,500	272	15,600	615
Total	124,000	476,000	38,800	47,600 [†]	42,400	155,000	81,200	202,000
Exports:								
Canada	5,490	--	1,830	--	1,260	--	3,090	--
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Malaysia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	530	702	105	64	20	--	125	64
United Arab Emirates	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	1,280	71	168	2	253	56	421	58
Total	7,310	773	2,100	66	1,540	56	3,640	122

[†]Revised. -- 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	2015		1st quarter– 2d quarter
		1st quarter	2d quarter	
Imports (for consumption):²				
Australia	617,000	241,000	145,000	385,000
Brazil	216,000	79,600	94,100	174,000
Jamaica ³	10,700	9,510	28,200	37,700
Suriname	536,000	98,000	63,900	162,000
Venezuela	70,300	34,500	18,600	53,100
Other	182,000	39,000	46,100	85,100
Total	1,630,000	501,000	395,000	897,000
Exports:⁴				
Canada	607,000	175,000	213,000	388,000
China	72,900	1,040	1,160	2,200
Egypt	400,000	90,700	121,000	211,000
Georgia	86,300	--	15	15
Iceland	273,000	--	63,000	63,000
Mexico	102,000	15,000	24,500	39,500
Norway	357,000	71,500	90,500	162,000
Russia	86,800	216	121	337
Other	146,000	67,600	44,500	112,000
Total	2,130,000	421,000	557,000	978,000

-- 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 and 54,000 t in the second 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 and 29,000 t in the second quarter of 2015.

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