

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## SODA ASH IN SEPTEMBER 2019

U.S. natural soda ash production in September was 969,000 metric tons (t), a 5% increase compared with that of the previous month and slightly less than that of September 2018. For the first nine months of 2019, production was 8.67 million metric tons (Mt), slightly less than the 8.82 Mt produced during the same period of 2018. Ending stocks were 308,000 t, 33% more than those of the preceding month (tables 1, 4).

A series of earthquakes occurred near Ridgecrest, CA, west of Searles Valley, July 4 and 5, 2019. These earthquakes damaged the processing facilities of Searles Valley Minerals, Inc. The damages curtailed or halted the production of many mineral products including soda ash and the company accessed stockpiles to supply consumers. The company declared force majeure in July and lifted it in late September for most products except sodium bicarbonate and some grades of boric acid.

Wyoming trona production in September 2019 was 1.53 Mt, 3% more than that of August 2019 and 16% more than that of September 2018. For the first nine months of 2019, trona production was 14 Mt, 7% more than the 13 Mt produced during the same time period in 2018.

Exports of soda ash in September 2019 were 452,000 t, 27% less than those of August 2019 and 15% less than those of September 2018. For the first nine months of 2019, exports were 5.16 Mt, slightly more those of the same time period in 2018 (tables 2, 4).

September 2019 imports of soda ash were 1,490 t, 27% more than imports in August but much less than the 36,500 t imported in September 2018. Relatively large quantities of soda ash were imported from Turkey in September 2018, followed by similar quantities in March and June of 2019 (tables 3, 4). Soda ash import tonnages can differ significantly from month to month, but generally are much smaller than soda ash export tonnages.

Apparent consumption for September 2019 was 443,000 t, a 35% increase from that of August 2019 but 15% less than that of September 2018. Apparent consumption can change significantly from month to month mostly owing to changes in the quantity of exports but usually stabilizes over the course of the year. Apparent consumption for January 2019 through September 2019 was 6% less than during the same time period in 2018 (table 4).

All percentages in this report were calculated using unrounded data.

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TABLE 1  
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production <sup>2</sup>	Stocks, end of period	
2018:			
January–September	8,820 <sup>r</sup>	268 <sup>r</sup>	13,100 <sup>r</sup>
September	988	268	1,320
October	1,010	237	1,500
November	997	309	1,490
December	1,060	297	1,580
January–December	11,900	297	17,600
2019:			
January	1,000	300	1,680
February	920	270	1,500
March	941	276	1,680
April	999	337	1,530
May	994	275	1,310
June	946	287	1,610
July	972	250	1,640
August	926	232	1,490
September	969 <sup>e</sup>	308	1,530 <sup>e</sup>
January–September	8,670 <sup>e</sup>	308	14,000 <sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup>Estimated. <sup>r</sup>Revised.

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

<sup>2</sup>Production data include soda ash equivalent from soda liquors only. Soda ash equivalent from mine water is not included. Soda liquors are withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

TABLE 2  
U.S. EXPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY, IN 2019<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September			January–September		
									Quantity	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)
Argentina	7,000	7,700	--	16,700	79	80	19,700	4,040	19,200	\$4,510	\$235	74,600	1	\$17,200
Australia	35,000	4,040	34,000	29,000	34,000	--	17,500	45,800	29,500	6,920	235	229,000	4	53,600
Brazil	94,500	104,000	35,000	60,800	83,400	82,000	50,300	81,100	39,700	7,950	200	631,000	12	132,000
Canada	15,800	17,500	15,200	18,300	18,400	14,700	15,700	15,400	15,600	3,760	240	147,000	3	35,400
Chile	13,000	45,200	31,500	14,200	46,800	46,300	32,800	38,700	47,000	11,100	236	315,000	6	73,100
China	--	61	--	--	36,000	--	--	36,000	44	11	253	72,100	1	13,400
Colombia	8,000	21,400	10,500	8,750	8,200	9,000	20,000	27,600	1	3	3,550	114,000	2	25,700
Ecuador	9,500	--	10,000	--	--	--	8,000	--	--	--	--	27,500	1	6,200
Guatemala	4,000	7,000	--	--	11,500	5,000	5,220	--	--	--	--	32,700	1	8,430
India	--	43,500	--	65,700	12,500	27,000	37,500	12,500	--	--	--	199,000	4	34,900
Indonesia	88,100	21,300	90,800	19,400	105,000	73,000	46,700	59,800	41,200	8,560	208	545,000	11	122,000
Japan	3,000	34,400	15,100	21,500	--	55,300	3,040	20,400	31,500	6,390	203	184,000	4	38,300
Korea, Republic of	11,500	18,000	15,700	34,200	26	41,600	23,600	22,100	50	10	206	167,000	3	35,800
Malaysia	46,100	62,800	52,500	39,300	43,200	39,500	52,100	12,000	55,600	12,200	219	403,000	8	89,900
Mexico	144,000	106,000	112,000	114,000	111,000	92,100	112,000	120,000	106,000	25,400	240	1,020,000	20	239,000
Nigeria	--	10,000	--	--	8,500	--	9,000	--	--	--	--	27,500	1	8,700
Peru	17,000	--	16,300	1,280	10,800	75	--	9,720	75	8	110	55,200	1	12,400
Philippines	7,500	--	--	9,000	14,600	--	13,500	--	10,000	2,310	231	54,600	1	12,000
Saudi Arabia	98	10,300	39	15,100	536	8,500	60	15,900	80	31	386	50,700	1	9,630
South Africa	--	10,100	--	4,790	--	14,400	--	12,000	15,000	2,510	167	56,300	1	9,970
Taiwan	16,500	9,500	15,200	38,800	8,000	17,900	10,200	20,600	16,000	3,750	235	153,000	3	35,200
Thailand	35,100	26,600	35,600	7,500	10,000	46,100	38,300	12,400	13,300	2,860	215	225,000	4	52,200
Tunisia	--	20,000	--	--	15,000	--	20,000	--	--	--	--	55,000	1	13,300
United Arab Emirates	--	15,500	--	6,000	--	11,000	--	10,500	--	--	--	43,000	1	8,270
Vietnam	31,000	15,000	18,500	31,500	35,500	30,000	17,500	36,000	5,110	1,140	224	220,000	4	50,100
Other	476	11,600	462	6,540	28,300	324	5,190	5,560	6,360	1,230	193	64,800	1	14,700
Total	587,000	621,000	508,000	562,000	641,000	614,000	557,000	618,000	452,000	101,000	223	5,160,000	100	1,150,000

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Free alongside ship values at U.S. ports.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3  
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY, IN 2019<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September			January–September		
									Quantity	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)
Belgium	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	162	\$88	545	162	(3)	\$88
Bulgaria	288	612	432	882	648	810	648	560	486	265	545	5,370	7	2,040
China	77	72	180	41	56	99	257	120	88	60	685	989	1	616
France	44	91	41	91	64	50	99	13	75	142	1,900	568	1	842
Mexico	304	97	252	150	244	57	19	258	532	188	353	1,910	2	727
Romania	95	172	38	38	--	--	76	76	38	17	457	534	(3)	240
Turkey	--	--	32,000	--	--	35,000	--	--	--	--	--	67,000	86	13,400
United Kingdom	146	197	91	73	143	183	75	108	89	57	636	1,100	1	751
Other	24	9	3	10	(3)	1	12	39	24	36	1,460	123	(3)	366
Total	978	1,250	33,000	1,280	1,150	36,200	1,190	1,180	1,490	853	571	77,800	100	19,100

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Cost, insurance, and freight values at U.S. ports.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau adjusted by U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 4  
U.S. APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons)

Period	Production	Exports	Imports	Net stock		Apparent consumption <sup>2</sup>
				Increase	Decrease	
2018:						
January–December	11,900,000	6,960,000	51,300	3,910	--	4,980,000
January–September	8,820,000	5,090,000	47,100 <sup>r</sup>	-- <sup>r</sup>	25,100 <sup>r</sup>	3,810,000 <sup>r</sup>
September	988,000	529,000	36,500	--	24,700	520,000
October	1,010,000	670,000	1,940	--	31,800	376,000
November	997,000	506,000	1,720	72,500	--	420,000
December	1,060,000	698,000	627	--	11,700	374,000
2019:						
January–September	8,670,000	5,160,000	77,800	10,300	--	3,580,000
January	1,000,000	587,000	978	2,640	--	415,000
February	920,000	621,000	1,250	--	30,500	331,000
March	941,000	508,000	33,000	6,870	--	459,000
April	999,000	562,000	1,280	60,300	--	378,000
May	994,000	641,000	1,150	--	61,600	416,000
June	946,000	614,000	36,200	12,100	--	356,000
July	972,000	557,000	1,190	--	37,500	453,000
August	926,000	618,000	1,180	--	17,900	327,000
September	969,000 <sup>e</sup>	452,000	1,490	75,800	--	443,000 <sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup>Estimated. <sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Production plus imports minus exports plus or minus stock changes.