

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE SECOND QUARTER 2019

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the second quarter of 2019 were 1,030,000 metric tons (t), 38% more than those in the first quarter of 2019, 13% more than those in the second quarter of 2018, and 27% more than those in the second quarter of 2017 (fig. 1). Jamaica (69%) and Brazil (21%) were the leading sources of crude and dried bauxite imports in the second quarter of 2019 (table 1).

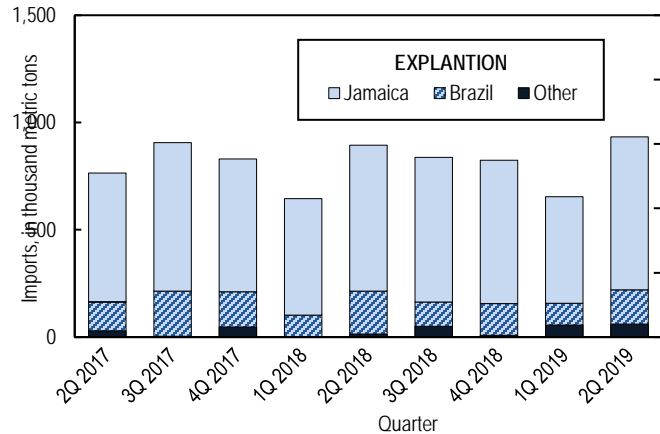


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the second quarter of 2017 through the second quarter of 2019. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the second quarter of 2019 were 364,000 t, 42% less than those in the first quarter of 2019, 3% more than those in the second quarter of 2018, and 19% more than those in the second quarter of 2017 (fig. 2). The leading sources of imported alumina in the second quarter of 2019 were Brazil (64%), Australia (13%), and Jamaica (8%) (table 3).

Exports of alumina during the second quarter of 2019 were 40,800 t, 37% less than those in the first quarter of 2019, 61% less than those in the second quarter of 2018, and 73% less than those in the second quarter of 2017 (fig. 2). The leading destinations for alumina exported in the second quarter of 2019 were Mexico (30%) and Canada (23%) (table 3).

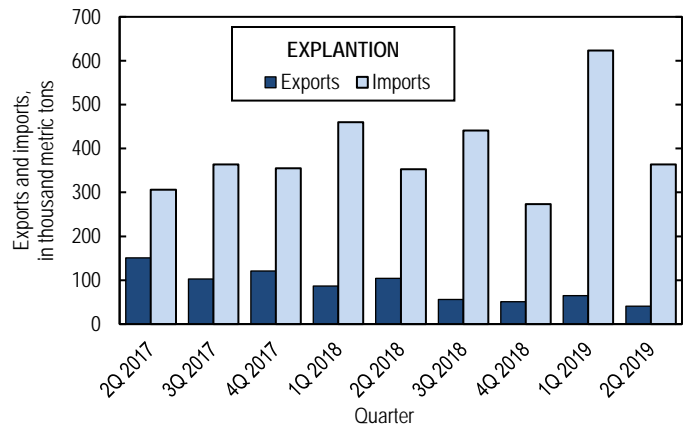


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the second quarter of 2017 through the second quarter of 2019. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

Production at Norsk Hydro ASA’s Alunorte alumina refinery in Barcarena, Brazil reached 80 to 85% of its 6.3 million-metric-tons-per-year (Mt/yr) capacity in June after ramping up production in May. The refinery was producing at only one half of its capacity previously. Bauxite production from the nearby Paragominas Mine also increased to supply the refinery. The adjacent 460,000-metric-ton-per-year (t/yr) Albras aluminum smelter which shut down one half of its capacity in April 2018 was also ramping up its idled capacity. (See Bauxite and Alumina in the First Quarter 2019.) The refinery was ordered by environmental regulators to shut down one half of its capacity after a suspected leak from its red mud impoundment in February 2018, which also resulted in shutdowns of capacity at the mine and smelter. The mine, refinery, and smelter were expected to be at full capacity by yearend (Mason, 2019; Norsk Hydro ASA, 2019).

A combination of high production costs, orders by environmental regulators, and a typhoon were reasons for shutdowns of capacity at several alumina refineries in China

during July and August. Industry sources estimated that at least 1.5 Mt/yr of capacity has been shut down temporarily at several alumina refineries in China. Plans for restarting affected capacity were not available (Li, 2019).

In August, Guinea Alumina Corp. [a subsidiary of Emirates Global Aluminium Ltd. (EGA)] started shipping bauxite from its 12-Mt/yr mine in Guinea to the 2-Mt/yr Al Taweelah alumina refinery in the United Arab Emirates. In April, EGA started alumina production at the refinery using bauxite from other sources but the mine in Guinea would be the principal bauxite supplier to the refinery, and surplus bauxite would be sold to other consumers (CRU Bauxite and Alumina Monitor, 2019).

References Cited

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TABLE 1
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CRUDE AND DRIED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2018	2019		
		1st quarter	2d quarter	1st quarter– 2d quarter
Imports for consumption:				
Brazil	637,000	157,000	220,000	377,000
Jamaica ²	2,570,000	498,000	713,000	1,210,000
Other	285,000	92,800	102,000	195,000
Total	3,490,000	748,000	1,030,000	1,780,000
Exports:				
Canada	2,880 ^r	277	768	1,050
Other	1,530	215	354	569
Total	4,410 ^r	492	1,120	1,610

^rRevised.

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 COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2019							
	2018		1st quarter		2d quarter		1st quarter– 2d quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports for consumption:								
Australia	--	115,000	--	54,200	--	54,000	--	108,000
China	43,400	10,000	4,990	1,780	3,510	790	8,500	2,570
Guyana	58,100	146,000	8,780	23,700	23,600	23,200	32,400	46,900
India	712	753	--	--	125	--	125	--
Other	373	636	282	5	323	3,600	605	3,610
Total	103,000	273,000	14,100	79,700	27,600	81,600	41,600	161,000
Exports:								
Canada	5,210	--	853	--	1,360	--	2,210	--
China	583	--	149	--	181	--	330	--
Mexico	733	--	415	--	141	--	556	--
Other	669	289	203	33	421	1	624	34
Total	7,190	289	1,620	33	2,100	1	3,720	34

-- 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 ALUMINA, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons, calcined equivalent)

Country or locality	2018	2019		
		1st quarter	2d quarter	1st quarter– 2d quarter
Imports for consumption:²				
Australia	293,000	166,000	47,000	213,000
Brazil	858,000	296,000	234,000	530,000
Jamaica ³	141,000	86,500	29,200	116,000
Other	236,000	73,700	54,100	128,000
Total	1,530,000	623,000	364,000	987,000
Exports:⁴				
Canada	34,100 ^r	9,070	9,280	18,400
China	26,300	967	1,200	2,170
Iceland	14	--	--	--
India	9,270	4,340	1,030	5,370
Mexico	59,400	14,700	12,200	26,800
Netherlands	28,600 ^r	1,020	1,780	2,790
Norway	26,100	69	32	101
Russia	355	262	165	427
United Arab Emirates	1,190	256	167	423
Venezuela	55,700	20,800	18	20,800
Other	47,200	13,300	15,000	28,300
Total	288,000 ^r	64,800	40,800	106,000

^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: 456,000 metric tons (t) in 2018; 99,600 t in the first quarter of 2019; 93,700 t in the second quarter of 2019.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 90,300 (revised) t in 2018; 26,200 t in the first quarter of 2019; 26,900 t in the second quarter of 2019.

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