

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## SODA ASH IN APRIL 2020

U.S. natural soda ash production in April was an estimated 823,000 metric tons (t), a 19% decrease compared with that of the previous month and 18% less than that of April 2019. This decrease in production is thought to be a direct result of the lower economic activity in the United States in recent months as a result of the worldwide pandemic. Soda ash production for the first 4 months of 2020 was 3.74 million metric tons (Mt), a 3% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019 (tables 1, 4).

Ending stocks in April increased to 333,000 t, slightly more than those of the preceding month. Stocks have increased for 3 consecutive months after decreasing in January to 275,000 t.

Wyoming trona production in April 2020 was 1.32 Mt, 6% less than that of March 2020 and 12% less than that of April 2019. Trona production for the first 4 months of 2020 was 5.65 Mt, a 10% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019.

Exports of soda ash in April 2020 were 414,000 t, 29% less than those of March 2020 and 26% less than those of April 2019. Exports for the first 4 months of 2020 were 2.22 Mt, a 3% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019 (tables 2, 4). These decreases are also believed to be a result of the worldwide pandemic, which has slowed global economic activity.

April 2020 imports of soda ash were 336 t, 45% less than those of March 2020 and 74% less than those of April 2019.

Import data for January and February were revised to include shipments of soda ash from Turkey. Soda ash import tonnages can differ significantly from month to month, but generally are much smaller than soda ash export tonnages (tables 3, 4).

Apparent consumption for April 2020 was an estimated 403,000 t, a slight decrease from that of March 2020, but 6% more than that of April 2019. Apparent consumption can change significantly from month to month mostly owing to variation in the quantity of exports but usually stabilizes over the course of the year (table 4).

Table 5 provides reported soda ash consumption statistics for the first quarter of 2020. Reported consumption for the first quarter was 1.13 Mt, a 4% decrease compared with consumption for the first quarter of 2019. During the first quarter of 2020, 537,000 t (48%) went to glassmaking and 314,000 t (28%) was consumed in the production of chemicals.

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	
2019:			
January–April	3,860	335 <sup>r</sup>	6,310 <sup>r</sup>
April	999	335	1,500
May	994	273	1,310
June	946	281	1,610
July	972	246	1,630 <sup>r</sup>
August	929	229	1,490
September	977	304	1,550
October	1,010	329	1,520
November	1,010	336	1,430
December	1,030	289	1,540
January–December	11,700	289	18,400
2020:			
January	954	275	1,570
February	944 <sup>e</sup>	306	1,350 <sup>e</sup>
March	1,020 <sup>e</sup>	326	1,410 <sup>e</sup>
April	823 <sup>e</sup>	333	1,320 <sup>e</sup>
January–April	3,740 <sup>e</sup>	333	5,650 <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 2020<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	April			January–April		
				Quantity	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)
Argentina	7,000	25,400	60	--	--	--	32,400	1	\$14,000
Australia	35,000	--	34,200	--	--	--	69,200	3	15,400
Belgium	263	12,100	581	31	\$3	\$110	13,000	1	1,840
Brazil	116,000	83,000	66,800	85,800	14,900	174	352,000	16	64,300
Canada	17,300	13,800	19,600	15,100	3,320	220	65,800	3	15,000
Chile	43,300	75,400	45,200	--	--	--	164,000	7	37,700
China	35,500	50,000	40,000	25,000	2,500	100	151,000	7	16,500
Colombia	4,000	20,000	10,000	13,000	2,550	196	47,000	2	9,710
Guatemala	--	12,000	6,600	4,000	729	182	22,600	1	4,720
India	--	32,600	--	11,900	1,960	165	44,500	2	7,270
Indonesia	63,300	63,200	40,000	36,800	7,130	194	203,000	9	41,000
Japan	20,500	--	29,500	18,000	3,230	179	68,000	3	12,300
Korea, Republic of	22,100	19,600	14,200	35,300	6,300	178	91,100	4	16,900
Malaysia	19,200	47,500	17,300	32,700	6,580	201	117,000	5	23,100
Mexico	111,000	104,000	110,000	66,900	16,300	244	392,000	18	93,000
Netherlands	10,900	16,000	--	10,000	2,040	204	36,900	2	6,560
Philippines	7,000	--	18,000	--	--	--	25,000	1	5,070
Saudi Arabia	20,300	--	45,000	80	31	381	65,400	3	11,200
South Africa	--	11,200	--	--	--	--	11,200	1	1,880
Taiwan	8,500	11,500	--	21,200	4,280	202	41,200	2	8,220
Thailand	35,700	--	57,300	25,700	5,380	210	119,000	5	24,400
United Arab Emirates	7,500	--	8,500	--	--	--	16,000	1	2,980
Vietnam	181	9,640	20,000	6,220	1,300	210	36,000	2	7,310
Other	572	29,100 <sup>r</sup>	725 <sup>r</sup>	6,460	1,420	220	36,900	2	7,750
Total	585,000	636,000	584,000	414,000	80,000	193	2,220,000	100	448,000

<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>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 2020<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	April			January–April		
				Quantity	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)
China	62	29	20	80	\$48	\$605	191	1	\$120
Dominican Republic	19	--	--	--	--	--	19	(3)	9
France	21	64	71	23	41	1,830	179	(3)	265
Germany	32	(3)	8	9	30	3,330	49	(3)	113
Mexico	175	209	192	97	40	413	672	2	254
Spain	--	--	76	--	--	--	76	(3)	39
Turkey	25	36,100	--	--	--	--	36,100	95	6,140
United Kingdom	108	36	201	127	64	504	471	1	257
Others	3	16	42	1	11	15,900	62	(3)	69
Total	444 <sup>r</sup>	36,500 <sup>r</sup>	610	336	235	698	37,800	100	7,270

<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>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	
2019:						
January–December	11,700,000	7,020,000	115,000	--	8,100	4,830,000
January–April	3,860,000	2,280,000	36,500 <sup>r</sup>	37,500 <sup>r</sup>	--	1,580,000 <sup>r</sup>
April	999,000	562,000	1,280	58,500	--	380,000
May	994,000	641,000	1,150	--	61,700	416,000
June	946,000	614,000	36,200	7,410	--	361,000
July	972,000	558,000	1,190	--	34,200	450,000
August	929,000	618,000	1,180	--	17,600	330,000
September	977,000	452,000	36,300	75,200	--	486,000
October	1,010,000	549,000	890	24,700	--	433,000
November	1,010,000	609,000	778	7,800	--	392,000
December	1,030,000	701,000	1,260	--	47,100	376,000
2020:						
January–April	3,740,000 <sup>e</sup>	2,220,000	37,800	43,300	--	1,510,000 <sup>e</sup>
January	954,000	585,000	444 <sup>r</sup>	--	14,100	383,000
February	944,000 <sup>e</sup>	636,000	36,400 <sup>r</sup>	30,900	--	314,000 <sup>e,r</sup>
March	1,020,000 <sup>e</sup>	584,000	610	19,900	--	412,000 <sup>e,r</sup>
April	823,000 <sup>e</sup>	414,000	336	6,580	--	403,000 <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.

TABLE 5  
REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH IN THE UNITED STATES, BY END USE, BY QUARTER<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

NAICS <sup>2</sup> code	End use	2019				1st quarter– 4th quarter	2020
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter		1st quarter
3272	Glass:						
327213	Container	250	250	255	250	1,000	250
327211	Flat	228	234	239	253	954	225
327993	Fiber	39	41	44	42	167	40
327212	Other	27	23	23	22	95	22
	Total	545	548	562	566	2,220	537
32518	Chemicals	335	358	333	343	1,370	314
325611	Soaps and detergents	69	67	71	65	272	70
322	Pulp and paper	10	10	9	10	39	9
221310	Water treatment <sup>3</sup>	10	11	10	10	42	10
56221	Flue gas desulfurization	47	38	39	38	161	33
4246	Distributors	71	61	68	61	260	66
	Other	84	74	108	88	353	87
	Total domestic consumption <sup>4</sup>	1,170	1,170	1,200	1,180	4,720	1,130
	Exports <sup>5</sup>	1,710	1,760	1,780	1,790	7,040	1,740
	Canada	44	49	43	42	178	48
	Total industry sales <sup>6</sup>	2,880	2,920	2,980	2,970	11,800	2,860
	Total sales from plants	2,890	2,970	2,990	3,030	11,900	2,650
	Total production	2,860	2,940	2,880 <sup>r</sup>	3,040	11,700	2,630

<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>North American Industry Classification System.

<sup>3</sup>Includes soda ash equivalent from soda liquors and purge liquors sold to power plants for water treatment. Sales of mine water are excluded.

<sup>4</sup>Imports reported by the producer/importer have been distributed into appropriate end-use categories listed above.

<sup>5</sup>As reported by producers; includes Canada. Data may not necessarily agree with those reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for the same periods.

<sup>6</sup>Represents soda ash from domestic origin (production and inventory changes) and imports and exports. Includes soda ash sold by coproducers and distributed by purchasers into appropriate end-use categories.