

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN MAY 2020

U.S. natural soda ash production in May was an estimated 739,000 metric tons (t), a 10% decrease compared with that of the previous month and 26% less than that of May 2019. Soda ash production for the first 5 months of 2020 was 4.48 million metric tons (Mt), an 8% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019 (tables 1, 4).

Ending stocks in May increased to 383,000 t, 15% more than those of the preceding month. Stocks have increased for 4 consecutive months after decreasing in January to 275,000 t.

Wyoming trona production in May 2020 was 1.12 Mt, 15% less than that of April 2020 and 14% less than that of May 2019. Trona production for the first 5 months of 2020 was 6.77 Mt, an 11% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019.

Exports of soda ash in May 2020 were 425,000 t, 3% more than those of April 2020 but 34% less than those of May 2019. Exports for the first 5 months of 2020 were 2.64 Mt, a 9% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019 (tables 2, 4).

May 2020 imports of soda ash were 666 t, almost double those of April 2020 but 42% less than those of May 2019. 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 May 2020 was an estimated 264,000 t, a 35% decrease from that of April 2020 and 37% less than that of May 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).

All percentages in this report were calculated using unrounded data.

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TABLE 1
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production ²	Stocks, end of period	
2019:			
January–May	4,860 ^r	273 ^r	7,610 ^r
May	994	273	1,310
June	946	281	1,610
July	972	246	1,630
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 ^e	306	1,350 ^e
March	1,020 ^e	326	1,410 ^e
April	823 ^e	333	1,320 ^e
May	739 ^e	383	1,120 ^e
January–May	4,480 ^e	383	6,770 ^e

^eEstimated. ^rRevised.

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

²Production 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 2020¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	April	May			January–May		
					Quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)
Argentina	7,000	25,400	60	--	7,520	\$1,530	\$203	39,900	2	\$15,600
Australia	35,000	--	34,200	--	30,500	6,610	217	99,700	4	22,000
Brazil	116,000	83,000	66,800	85,800	36,300	7,550	208	388,000	15	71,800
Canada	17,300	13,800	19,600	15,100	14,000	2,980	213	79,800	3	18,000
Chile	43,300	75,400	45,200	--	76,400	17,500	230	240,000	9	55,300
China	35,500	50,000	40,000	25,000	--	--	--	151,000	6	16,500
Colombia	4,000	20,000	10,000	13,000	--	--	--	47,000	2	9,710
Guatemala	--	12,000	6,600	4,000	--	--	--	22,600	1	4,720
India	--	32,600	--	11,900	--	--	--	44,500	2	7,270
Indonesia	63,300	63,200	40,000	36,800	65,600	12,700	193	269,000	10	53,700
Japan	20,500	--	29,500	18,000	20,200	3,750	186	88,200	3	16,100
Korea, Republic of	22,100	19,600	14,200	35,300	27,500	5,140	187	119,000	4	22,000
Malaysia	19,200	47,500	17,300	32,700	--	--	--	117,000	4	23,100
Mexico	111,000	104,000	110,000	66,900	37,700	9,630	255	429,000	16	103,000
Netherlands	10,900	16,000	--	10,000	--	--	--	36,900	1	6,560
Philippines	7,000	--	18,000	--	8,500	1,750	205	33,500	1	6,820
Saudi Arabia	20,300	--	45,000	80	--	--	--	65,400	2	11,200
Taiwan	8,500	11,500	--	21,200	24,500	4,910	200	65,700	2	13,100
Thailand	35,700	--	57,300	25,700	11,500	2,270	197	130,000	5	26,700
United Arab Emirates	7,500	--	8,500	--	20,000	3,200	160	36,000	1	6,180
Vietnam	181	9,640	20,000	6,220	40,200	7,950	198	76,300	3	15,300
Others	835 ^r	52,400 ^r	1,310 ^r	6,500 ^r	4,980	968	194	66,000	2	12,400
Total	585,000	636,000	584,000	414,000	425,000	88,400	208	2,640,000	100	537,000

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²Free 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 2020¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	April	May		January–May			
					Quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)
China	62	29	20	80	65	\$39	\$594	256	1	\$158
France	21	64	71	23	51	88	1,710	230	1	353
Mexico	175	209	192	97	233	81	349	906	2	336
Turkey	25	36,100	--	--	--	--	--	36,100	94	6,140
United Kingdom	108	36	201	127	202	123	611	673	2	380
Others	54 ^r	16	126 ^r	10 ^r	115	129	1,110	321	1	359
Total	444	36,400	610	336	666	459	688	38,500	100	7,730

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²Cost, insurance, and freight values at U.S. ports.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH¹

(Metric tons)

Period	Production	Exports	Imports	Net stock		Apparent consumption ²
				Increase	Decrease	
2019:						
January–December	11,700,000	7,020,000	115,000	--	8,100	4,830,000
January–May	4,860,000 [†]	2,920,000	37,700 [†]	--	24,200 [†]	2,000,000 [†]
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–May	4,480,000 [‡]	2,640,000	38,500	93,800	--	1,780,000 [‡]
January	954,000	585,000	444	--	14,100	384,000
February	944,000 [‡]	636,000	36,400	30,900	--	314,000 [‡]
March	1,020,000 [‡]	584,000	610	19,900	--	412,000 [‡]
April	823,000 [‡]	414,000	336	6,580	--	403,000 [‡]
May	739,000 [‡]	425,000	666	50,500	--	264,000 [‡]

[‡]Estimated. [†]Revised. -- Zero.

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

²Production plus imports minus exports plus or minus stock changes.