

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## SODA ASH IN JULY 2020

The ongoing worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has weakened demand for soda ash, which resulted in reductions in production and exports, and increases in stocks for most of 2020 year to date. This trend may have begun to shift in July. U.S. natural soda ash production in July was an estimated 718,000 metric tons (t), a 31% increase compared with that of the downwardly revised previous month's production but still 26% less than that of July 2019. Soda ash production for the first 7 months of 2020 was 5.63 million metric tons (Mt), a 17% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019 (tables 1, 4).

Ending stocks in July decreased to 239,000 t, 47% less than those of the preceding month, after rising each month since February. Faced with unsustainable stockpiles, soda ash producers reduced trona production and maintained relatively low soda ash production and used stocks to meet demand in order to alleviate excessive stocks.

Wyoming trona production in July 2020 was 712,000 t, the lowest level of trona production reported in many years, 24% less than that of June 2020 and 56% less than that of July 2019. Trona production for the first 7 months of 2020 was 8.35 Mt, a 23% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019.

Exports of soda ash also increased in July 2020 to 386,000 t, 30% more than those of June 2020 but 31% less than those of July 2019. Exports for the first 7 months of 2020 were 3.33 Mt, a 19% decrease compared with those of the same period of 2019 (tables 2, 4).

July 2020 imports of soda ash were 420 t compared with revised imports of 30,600 t in June 2020. Imports for the first 7 months of 2020 were 69,500 t, slightly less than during the same

period of 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 July 2020 was an estimated 548,000 t, more than double that of June 2020 and 22% more than that of July 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 second quarter of 2020. Reported consumption for the second quarter was 1.03 Mt, a 12% decrease compared with consumption for the second quarter of 2019. During the second quarter of 2020, 482,000 t (47%) went to glassmaking and 297,000 t (29%) was consumed in the production of chemicals. Reported consumption for the first 6 months of 2020 was 2.16 Mt, 8% less than consumption for the same period of 2019.

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–July	6,780	246 <sup>r</sup>	10,900 <sup>r</sup>
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	927 <sup>r</sup>	306	1,340 <sup>r</sup>
March	1,030 <sup>r</sup>	326	1,440 <sup>r</sup>
April	784 <sup>r</sup>	333	1,300 <sup>r</sup>
May	679 <sup>r</sup>	383	1,060 <sup>r</sup>
June	547 <sup>r,e</sup>	454 <sup>e</sup>	935 <sup>r</sup>
July	718 <sup>e</sup>	239 <sup>e</sup>	712 <sup>r</sup>
January–July	5,630 <sup>e</sup>	239 <sup>e</sup>	8,350 <sup>r</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	May	June	July			January–July		
							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	--	7,520	12,800	8,270	\$1,950	\$236	61,000	2	\$20,400
Australia	35,000	--	34,200	--	30,500	32,000	--	--	--	132,000	4	28,400
Brazil	116,000	83,000	66,800	85,800	36,300	13,000	55,000	10,000	182	456,000	14	84,400
Canada	17,300	13,800	19,600	15,100	14,000	12,700	15,600	3,650	234	108,000	3	24,500
Chile	43,300	75,400	45,200	--	76,400	5,560	32,800	8,050	245	279,000	8	64,300
China	35,500	50,000	40,000	25,000	--	--	192	45	234	151,000	5	16,500
Colombia	4,000	20,000	10,000	13,000	--	--	24,700	5,270	213	71,700	2	15,000
Guatemala	--	12,000	6,600	4,000	--	--	7,400	1,710	231	30,000	1	6,430
India	--	32,600	--	11,900	--	22,000	33,500	5,970	178	100,000	3	16,900
Indonesia	63,300	63,200	40,000	36,800	65,600	40	47,000	8,670	184	316,000	9	62,400
Japan	20,500	--	29,500	18,000	20,200	22,000	61	15	246	110,000	3	20,000
Korea, Republic of	22,100	19,600	14,200	35,300	27,500	19,100	391	104	266	138,000	4	25,600
Malaysia	19,200	47,500	17,300	32,700	--	10,500	--	--	--	127,000	4	24,900
Mexico	111,000	104,000	110,000	66,900	37,700	86,800	131,000	28,700	220	647,000	19	152,000
Netherlands	10,900	16,000	--	10,000	--	--	--	--	--	36,900	1	6,560
Peru	--	10,600	75	75	--	75	7,750	1,630	211	18,600	1	3,940
Philippines	7,000	--	18,000	--	8,500	--	4	5	1,250	33,500	1	6,820
Saudi Arabia	20,300	--	45,000	80	--	13,800	54	31	574	79,200	2	13,600
Taiwan	8,500	11,500	--	21,200	24,500	19,900	102	27	265	85,700	3	17,100
Thailand	35,700	--	57,300	25,700	11,500	6,320	15,100	2,990	197	152,000	5	30,600
United Arab Emirates	7,500	--	8,500	--	20,000	9,000	--	--	--	45,000	1	7,810
Vietnam	181	9,640	20,000	6,220	40,200	10,100	1,490	257	173	87,800	3	18,100
Others	835	41,800 <sup>r</sup>	1,230 <sup>r</sup>	6,420 <sup>r</sup>	4,980	2,180 <sup>r</sup>	5,840	1,150	196	63,300	2	11,500
Total	585,000	636,000	584,000	414,000	425,000	298,000	386,000	80,200	208	3,330,000	100	678,000

<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	May	June	July			January–July		
							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	65	28	74	\$46	\$168	358	1	\$221
Mexico	175	209	192	97	233	136	194	65	335	1,240	2	452
Russia	--	--	--	--	99	267	--	--	--	366	1	127
Turkey	25	36,100	--	--	--	30,000 <sup>r,c</sup>	--	--	--	66,100 <sup>e</sup>	95	11,200 <sup>e</sup>
United Kingdom	108	36	201	127	202	108	72	35	486	853	1	465
Others	74 <sup>r</sup>	81 <sup>r</sup>	197 <sup>r</sup>	32 <sup>r</sup>	67 <sup>r</sup>	23	80	128	1,600	555	1	846
Total	444	36,400 <sup>r</sup>	610	336	666	30,600 <sup>r,c</sup>	420	274	652	69,500 <sup>e</sup>	100	13,400 <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>Cost, insurance, and freight values at U.S. ports.

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–July	6,780,000	4,090,000	70,100 <sup>r</sup>	--	51,000 <sup>r</sup>	2,810,000
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–July	5,630,000 <sup>r,e</sup>	3,330,000	69,500 <sup>e</sup>	--	50,700 <sup>e</sup>	2,430,000 <sup>r,e</sup>
January	954,000	585,000	444	--	14,100	383,000
February	927,000 <sup>r</sup>	636,000	36,400 <sup>r</sup>	30,900	--	296,000 <sup>r</sup>
March	1,030,000 <sup>r</sup>	584,000	610	19,900	--	422,000 <sup>r</sup>
April	784,000 <sup>r</sup>	414,000	336	6,580	--	363,000 <sup>r</sup>
May	679,000 <sup>r</sup>	425,000	666	50,500	--	204,000 <sup>r</sup>
June	547,000 <sup>r,e</sup>	298,000	30,600 <sup>r,e</sup>	71,000 <sup>e</sup>	--	208,000 <sup>r,e</sup>
July	718,000 <sup>e</sup>	386,000	420	--	215,000 <sup>e</sup>	548,000 <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	2d quarter <sup>c</sup>	1st quarter– 2nd quarter <sup>c</sup>
3272	Glass:								
327213	Container	250	250	255	250	1,010	250	260	510
327211	Flat	228	234	239	253	954	225	172	397
327993	Fiber	39	41	44	42	166	40	38	78
327212	Other	27	23	23	22	95	22	12	34
	Total	545	548	562	566	2,220	537	482	1,020
32518	Chemicals	335	358	333	343	1,370	314	297	611
325611	Soaps and detergents	69	67	71	65	272	70	64	134
322	Pulp and paper	10	10	9	10	39	9	10	19
221310	Water treatment <sup>3</sup>	10	11	10	10	41	10	9	19
56221	Flue gas desulfurization	47	38	39	38	162	33	31	64
4246	Distributors	71	61	68	61	261	66	60	126
	Other	84	74	108	88	354	87	77	164
	Total domestic consumption <sup>4</sup>	1,170	1,170	1,200	1,180	4,720	1,130	1,030	2,160
	Exports <sup>5</sup>	1,710	1,760	1,780	1,790	7,040	1,740	1,120	2,860
	Canada	44	49	43	42	178	48	40	88
	Total industry sales <sup>6</sup>	2,880	2,920	2,980	2,970	11,800	2,860	2,150	5,010
	Total sales from plants	2,890	2,970	2,990	3,030	11,900	2,650	2,350	5,000
	Total production	2,860	2,940	2,880	3,040	11,700	2,630	2,280	4,910

<sup>6</sup>Estimated.

<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.