

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN AUGUST 2020

In August, soda ash production increased for the second consecutive month to 816,000 t. That represented a 14% increase compared with the previous month's production and 49% more than that of June, but still 12% less than that of August 2019. Soda ash production for the first 8 months of 2020 was 6.45 million metric tons (Mt), a 16% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019 (tables 1, 4). The ongoing worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has weakened global demand for soda ash.

Ending stocks in August increased to an estimated 320,000 t, 34% more than those of the preceding month, after a large decrease in stocks in July compared with ending stocks in June.

Wyoming trona production in August 2020 was 993,000 t, 39% more than that of July 2020 and 33% less than that of August 2019. Trona production for the first 8 months of 2020 was 9.34 Mt, a 24% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019.

Exports of soda ash decreased in August 2020 to 363,000 t, 6% less than those of July 2020 and 41% less than those of August 2019. Exports for the first 8 months of 2020 were 3.69 Mt, a 22% decrease compared with those of the same period of 2019 (tables 2, 4).

August 2020 imports of soda ash were 687 t 64% more than those of the previous month but 42% less than those of August 2019. Imports for the first 8 months of 2020 were 70,200 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 August 2020 was an estimated 374,000 t, 32% less than that of July 2020 but 13% more than that of August 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–August	7,700	229 ^r	12,300 ^r
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	306	1,340
March	1,030	326	1,440
April	784	333	1,300
May	679	383	1,060
June	547 ^e	454 ^e	935
July	718 ^e	239 ^e	712
August	816 ^e	320 ^e	993
January–August	6,450 ^e	320 ^e	9,340

^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	June	July	August			January–August		
								Quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)
Argentina	7,000	25,400	60	--	7,520	12,800	8,270	--	--	--	61,000	2	\$20,400
Australia	35,000	--	34,200	--	30,500	32,000	--	34,600	\$7,020	\$203	166,000	5	35,500
Brazil	116,000	83,000	66,800	85,800	36,300	13,000	55,000	47,900	9,590	200	504,000	14	93,900
Canada	17,300	13,800	19,600	15,100	14,000	12,700	15,600	14,200	3,350	235	122,000	3	27,800
Chile	43,300	75,400	45,200	--	76,400	5,560	32,800	41,500	9,680	233	320,000	9	74,000
China	35,500	50,000	40,000	25,000	--	--	192	--	--	--	151,000	4	16,500
Colombia	4,000	20,000	10,000	13,000	--	--	24,700	12,100	2,590	214	83,800	2	17,600
Guatemala	--	12,000	6,600	4,000	--	--	7,400	--	--	--	30,000	1	6,430
India	--	32,600	--	11,900	--	22,000	33,500	12,600	2,010	159	113,000	3	18,900
Indonesia	63,300	63,200	40,000	36,800	65,600	40	47,000	14,000	2,710	194	330,000	9	65,100
Japan	20,500	--	29,500	18,000	20,200	22,000	61	10,100	2,020	200	120,000	3	22,000
Korea, Republic of	22,100	19,600	14,200	35,300	27,500	19,100	391	19,100	3,400	178	157,000	4	29,000
Malaysia	19,200	47,500	17,300	32,700	--	10,500	--	18,500	3,590	194	146,000	4	28,500
Mexico	111,000	104,000	110,000	66,900	37,700	86,800	131,000	80,900	19,700	243	728,000	20	171,000
Netherlands	10,900	16,000	--	10,000	--	--	--	--	--	--	36,900	1	6,560
Peru	--	10,600	75	75	--	75	7,750	14,100	3,070	218	32,700	1	7,010
Philippines	7,000	--	18,000	--	8,500	--	4	--	--	--	33,500	1	6,820
Saudi Arabia	20,300	--	45,000	80	--	13,800	54	--	--	--	79,200	2	13,600
Taiwan	8,500	11,500	--	21,200	24,500	19,900	102	--	--	--	85,700	2	17,100
Thailand	35,700	--	57,300	25,700	11,500	6,320	15,100	18,600	3,750	201	170,000	5	34,400
United Arab Emirates	7,500	--	8,500	--	20,000	9,000	--	8,680	1,390	161	53,700	1	9,200
Vietnam	181	9,640	20,000	6,220	40,200	10,100	1,490	--	--	--	87,800	2	18,100
Others	835	41,800	1,230	6,420	4,980	2,180	5,840	15,700	2,980	191	79,000	2	14,500
Total	585,000	636,000	584,000	414,000	425,000	298,000	386,000	363,000	76,800	212	3,690,000	100	754,000

-- 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	June	July	August			January–August		
								Quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)
China	62	29	20	80	65	28	74	159	\$61	\$39	516	1	\$282
Mexico	175	209	192	97	233	136	194	118	51	437	1,350	2	503
Russia	--	--	--	--	99	267	--	144	54	374	510	1	181
Turkey	25	36,100	--	--	--	30,000 ^c	--	--	--	--	66,100 ^c	94	11,200 ^c
United Kingdom	108	36	201	127	202	108	72	145	80	554	997	1	545
Others	74	81	197	32	67	23	80	122	103	845	677	1	949
Total	444	36,400	610	336	666	30,600 ^c	420	687	350	509	70,200 ^c	100	13,700 ^c

^cEstimated. -- 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 adjusted by U.S Geological Survey.

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–August	7,700,000	4,710,000	71,300 ^r	--	68,700 ^r	3,140,000 ^r
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–August	6,450,000 ^e	3,690,000	70,200 ^e	30,680 ^e	--	2,800,000 ^e
January	954,000	585,000	444	--	14,100	383,000
February	927,000	636,000	36,400	30,900	--	296,000
March	1,030,000	584,000	610	19,900	--	422,000
April	784,000	414,000	336	6,580	--	363,000
May	679,000	425,000	666	50,500	--	204,000
June	547,000 ^e	298,000	30,600 ^e	71,000 ^e	--	208,000 ^e
July	718,000 ^e	386,000	420	--	215,000 ^e	548,000 ^e
August	816,000 ^e	363,000	687	80,900 ^e	--	374,000 ^e

^eEstimated. ^rRevised. -- 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.