

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN SEPTEMBER 2020

In September, soda ash production was 734,000 metric tons (t), a 10% decrease compared with the previous month's production and 25% less than that of September 2019. Soda ash production for the first 9 months of 2020 was 7.18 million metric tons (Mt), a 17% 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 September decreased to an estimated 231,000 t, 28% less than those of the preceding month, after a large increase in stocks in August compared with ending stocks in July.

Wyoming trona production in September 2020 was 1.14 Mt, 15% more than that of August 2020 but 26% less than that of September 2019. Trona production for the first 9 months of 2020 was 10.5 Mt, a 25% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019.

Exports of soda ash increased in September 2020 to 471,000 t, 30% more than those of August 2020 and 4% more than those of September 2019. Exports for the first 9 months of 2020 were 4.16 Mt, a 19% decrease compared with those of the same period of 2019 (tables 2, 4).

September 2020 imports of soda ash were 396 t, 42% less than those of the previous month and 99% less than those of September 2019. A large shipment of soda ash from Turkey was

imported in September 2019 but no similar shipments were known to have taken place in September 2020. Imports for the first 9 months of 2020 were 70,500 t, 37% 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 September 2020 was an estimated 353,000 t, 6% less than that of August 2020 and 27% less than that of September 2019. Apparent consumption for the first 9 months of 2020 was an estimated 3.15 Mt, 13% less than that of the same period of 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, but apparent consumption has been consistently lower compared with that of 2019 because of the global pandemic (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–September	8,680 ^r	304 ^r	13,900 ^r
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
September	734 ^e	231 ^e	1,140
January–September	7,180 ^e	231 ^e	10,500

^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	September			January–September		
									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	1	\$20,400
Australia	35,000	--	34,200	--	30,500	32,000	--	34,600	29,000	\$6,280	\$217	195,000	5	41,700
Brazil	116,000	83,000	66,800	85,800	36,300	13,000	55,000	47,900	29,600	5,990	202	534,000	13	99,900
Canada	17,300	13,800	19,600	15,100	14,000	12,700	15,600	14,200	13,600	2,950	218	136,000	3	30,800
Chile	43,300	75,400	45,200	--	76,400	5,560	32,800	41,500	39,200	9,410	240	359,000	9	83,400
China	35,500	50,000	40,000	25,000	--	--	192	--	50,000	7,030	141	201,000	5	23,600
Colombia	4,000	20,000	10,000	13,000	--	--	24,700	12,100	10,000	2,140	214	93,800	2	19,700
Guatemala	--	12,000	6,600	4,000	--	--	7,400	--	2,930	587	200	32,900	1	7,020
India	--	32,600	--	11,900	--	22,000	33,500	12,600	10,100	1,990	197	123,000	3	20,900
Indonesia	63,300	63,200	40,000	36,800	65,600	40	47,000	14,000	19,300	3,610	187	349,000	8	68,700
Japan	20,500	--	29,500	18,000	20,200	22,000	61	10,100	9,500	1,710	180	130,000	3	23,700
Korea, Republic of	22,100	19,600	14,200	35,300	27,500	19,100	391	19,100	16,800	2,890	172	174,000	4	31,900
Malaysia	19,200	47,500	17,300	32,700	--	10,500	--	18,500	48,100	8,910	185	194,000	5	37,400
Mexico	111,000	104,000	110,000	66,900	37,700	86,800	131,000	80,900	89,400	21,800	244	817,000	20	193,000
Netherlands	10,900	16,000	--	10,000	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	36,900	1	6,560
Peru	--	10,600	75	75	--	75	7,750	14,100	--	--	--	32,700	1	7,010
Philippines	7,000	--	18,000	--	8,500	--	4	--	11,500	2,380	207	45,000	1	9,200
Saudi Arabia	20,300	--	45,000	80	--	13,800	54	--	79	31	390	79,300	2	13,600
Taiwan	8,500	11,500	--	21,200	24,500	19,900	102	--	18,500	3,710	200	104,000	3	20,800
Thailand	35,700	--	57,300	25,700	11,500	6,320	15,100	18,600	45,800	5,430	119	216,000	5	39,800
United Arab Emirates	7,500	--	8,500	--	20,000	9,000	--	8,680	--	--	--	53,700	1	9,200
Vietnam	181	9,640	20,000	6,220	40,200	10,100	1,490	--	20,600	3,520	171	108,000	3	21,600
Others	835	41,800	1,230	6,420	4,980	2,180	5,840	15,700	6,760	1,210	179	85,700	2	15,700
Total	585,000	636,000	584,000	414,000	425,000	298,000	386,000	363,000	471,000	91,600	195	4,160,000	100	846,000

-- 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	September			January–September		
									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	54	\$31	\$574	571	1	\$313
Mexico	175	209	192	97	233	136	194	118	38	26	684	1,390	2	529
Russia	--	--	--	--	99	267	(3) [†]	144	(3)	(3)	--	510	1	181
Turkey	25	36,100	--	--	--	30,000 ^e	--	--	--	--	--	66,100 ^e	94	11,200 ^e
United Kingdom	108	36	201	127	202	108	72	145	108	57	528	1,110	2	602
Others	74	81	197	32	67	23	80	122	196	195	995	872	1	1,140
Total	444	36,400	610	336	666	30,600 ^e	420	688 [†]	396	309	780	70,600 ^e	100	14,000 ^e

^eEstimated. [†]Revised. -- 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.

³Less than ½ unit.

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–September	8,680,000 ^r	5,160,000	113,000	6,610 ^r	--	3,630,000 ^r
September	977,000	452,000	36,300	75,200	--	486,000
October	1,010,000	549,000	891	24,700	--	433,000
November	1,010,000	609,000	779	7,800	--	392,000
December	1,030,000	701,000	1,270	--	47,100	376,000
2020:						
January–September	7,180,000 ^e	4,160,000	70,600 ^e	--	58,500	3,150,000 ^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	688 ^r	80,900 ^e	--	374,000 ^e
September	734,000 ^e	471,000	396	--	88,800 ^e	352,000 ^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.