

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN OCTOBER 2020

In October, soda ash production was 921,000 metric tons (t), a 25% increase compared with the previous month's production but 8% less than that of October 2019. Soda ash production for the first 10 months of 2020 was 8.1 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 October increased to an estimated 300,000 t, 30% more than those of the preceding month.

Wyoming trona production in October 2020 was 1.45 Mt, 27% more than that of September 2020 but 5% less than that of October 2019. Trona production for the first 10 months of 2020 was 11.9 Mt, a 23% decrease compared with that of the same period of 2019.

Exports of soda ash increased in October 2020 to 487,000 t, 3% more than those of September 2020 but 11% less than those of October 2019. Exports for the first 10 months of 2020 were 4.65 Mt, a 19% decrease compared with those of the same period of 2019 (tables 2, 4).

October 2020 imports of soda ash were 465 t compared to the revised 28,900 t imported in September 2020. Imports for the first 10 months of 2020 were 96,700 t, 15% 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 October 2020 was an estimated 365,000 t, 4% less than that of September 2020 and 16% less

than that of October 2019. Apparent consumption for the first 10 months of 2020 was an estimated 3.54 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).

Table 5 provides reported soda ash consumption statistics for the third quarter of 2020. Reported consumption for the third quarter was 1.14 Mt, a 5% decrease compared with consumption for the third quarter of 2019. During the third quarter of 2020, 557,000 t (49%) went to glassmaking and 304,000 t (27%) was consumed in the production of chemicals. Reported consumption for the first 9 months of 2020 was 3.28 Mt, 7% 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 STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming tra production
	Production ²	Stocks, end of period	
2019:			
January–October	9,690 ^r	329 ^r	15,400 ^r
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
October	921 ^e	300 ^e	1,450
January–October	8,110 ^e	300 ^e	11,900

^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	October			January–October		
										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	--	--	27,000	\$6,960	\$257	88,000	2	\$27,400
Australia	35,000	--	34,200	--	30,500	32,000	--	34,600	29,000	--	--	--	195,000	4	41,700
Brazil	116,000	83,000	66,800	85,800	36,300	13,000	55,000	47,900	29,600	72,900	10,400	143	607,000	13	110,000
Canada	17,300	13,800	19,600	15,100	14,000	12,700	15,600	14,200	13,600	13,600	3,160	232	150,000	3	33,900
Chile	43,300	75,400	45,200	--	76,400	5,560	32,800	41,500	39,200	--	--	--	359,000	8	83,400
China	35,500	50,000	40,000	25,000	--	--	192	--	50,000	--	--	--	201,000	4	23,600
Colombia	4,000	20,000	10,000	13,000	--	--	24,700	12,100	10,000	14,000	2,990	214	108,000	2	22,700
Guatemala	--	12,000	6,600	4,000	--	--	7,400	--	2,930	6,400	1,510	237	39,300	1	8,530
India	--	32,600	--	11,900	--	22,000	33,500	12,600	10,100	30,200	4,160	138	153,000	3	25,000
Indonesia	63,300	63,200	40,000	36,800	65,600	40	47,000	14,000	19,300	43,500	7,740	178	393,000	8	76,400
Japan	20,500	--	29,500	18,000	20,200	22,000	61	10,100	9,500	16,500	3,240	196	146,000	3	27,000
Korea, Republic of	22,100	19,600	14,200	35,300	27,500	19,100	391	19,100	16,800	24,500	4,420	180	199,000	4	36,300
Malaysia	19,200	47,500	17,300	32,700	--	10,500	--	18,500	48,100	34,700	6,430	185	228,000	5	43,900
Mexico	111,000	104,000	110,000	66,900	37,700	86,800	131,000	80,900	89,400	97,800	24,400	250	915,000	20	218,000
Netherlands	10,900	16,000	--	10,000	--	--	--	--	--	70	8	110	37,000	1	6,570
Peru	--	10,600	75	75	--	75	7,750	14,100	--	11,600	2,500	216	44,200	1	9,510
Philippines	7,000	--	18,000	--	8,500	--	4	--	11,500	12,000	2,200	183	57,000	1	11,400
Saudi Arabia	20,300	--	45,000	80	--	13,800	54	--	79	12,500	2,180	174	91,800	2	15,800
Taiwan	8,500	11,500	--	21,200	24,500	19,900	102	--	18,500	10,500	1,980	188	115,000	2	22,700
Thailand	35,700	--	57,300	25,700	11,500	6,320	15,100	18,600	45,800	16,500	3,250	197	233,000	5	43,100
United Arab Emirates	7,500	--	8,500	--	20,000	9,000	--	8,680	--	8,500	1,520	179	62,200	1	10,700
Vietnam	181	9,640	20,000	6,220	40,200	10,100	1,490	--	20,600	25,000	4,740	190	133,000	3	26,400
Others	835	41,800	1,230	6,420	4,980	2,180	5,840	15,700	6,760	8,980	1,500	167	94,700	2	17,200
Total	585,000	636,000	584,000	414,000	425,000	298,000	386,000	363,000	471,000	487,000	95,400	196	4,650,000	100	941,000

-- 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	October		January–October			
										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	23	\$49	\$2,140	594	1	\$362
Mexico	175	209	192	97	233	136	194	118	38	39	23	576	1,430	1	552
Russia	--	--	--	--	99	267	-- ^r	144	-- ^r	72	27	373.68	582	1	208
Turkey	25	36,100	--	--	--	27,200 ^{r,e}	--	--	28,500 ^{r,e}	--	--	--	91,800 ^e	95	16,100 ^e
United Kingdom	108	36	201	127	202	108	72	145	108	53	24	459	1,160	1	626
Others	74	81	197	32	67	23	80	122	196	278	299	1,080	1,150	1	1,440
Total	444	36,400	610	336	666	27,800 ^{r,e}	421	687	28,900 ^{r,e}	465	422	908	96,700 ^e	100	19,300 ^e

^eEstimated. ^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 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–October	9,690,000 ^r	5,710,000	113,000	31,300 ^r	--	4,060,000 ^r
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–October	8,110,000 ^e	4,650,000	96,700 ^e	11,000	--	3,540,000 ^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	27,800 ^{r,e}	71,000 ^e	--	206,000 ^{r,e}
July	718,000 ^e	386,000	421	--	215,000 ^e	548,000 ^e
August	816,000 ^e	363,000	687	80,900 ^e	--	374,000 ^e
September	734,000 ^e	471,000	28,900 ^{r,e}	--	88,800 ^e	381,000 ^{r,e}
October	921,000 ^e	487,000	465	69,500 ^e	--	365,000 ^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.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau adjusted by U.S Geological Survey.

TABLE 5
REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH IN THE UNITED STATES, BY END USE, BY QUARTER¹

(Thousand metric tons)

NAICS ² code	End use	2019					2020				
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	1st quarter– 3d quarter	
3272	Glass:										
327213	Container	250	250	255	250	1,010	250	259 ^r	253	762	
327211	Flat	228	234	239	253	954	225	169 ^r	241	635	
327993	Fiber	39	41	44	42	166	40	36 ^r	41	117	
327212	Other	27	23	23	22	95	22	12	22	56	
	Total	545	548	562	566	2,220	537	476 ^r	557	1,570	
32518	Chemicals	335	358	333	343	1,370	314	291 ^r	304	909	
325611	Soaps and detergents	69	67	71	65	272	70	64	62	195	
322	Pulp and paper	10	10	9	10	39	9	10	9	28	
221310	Water treatment ³	10	11	10	10	41	10	9	11	30	
56221	Flue gas desulfurization	47	38	39	38	162	33	30 ^r	42	105	
4246	Distributors	71	61	68	61	261	66	59 ^r	59	184	
	Other	84	74	108	88	354	87	77	95	259	
	Total domestic consumption ⁴	1,170	1,170	1,200	1,180	4,720	1,130	1,020 ^r	1,140	3,280	
	Exports ⁵	1,710	1,760	1,780	1,790	7,040	1,740	1,070 ^r	1,220	4,030	
	Canada	44	49	43	42	178	48	40	40	128	
	Total industry sales ⁶	2,880	2,920	2,980	2,970	11,800	2,860	2,090 ^r	2,360	7,310	
	Total sales from plants	2,890	2,970	2,990	3,030	11,900	2,920 ^r	1,960 ^r	2,340	7,220	
	Total production	2,860	2,940	2,880	3,040	11,700	2,910 ^r	1,920 ^r	2,270	7,100	

^rRevised.

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

²North American Industry Classification System.

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

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

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

⁶Represents 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.