

Mineral Industry Surveys

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ALUMINUM IN DECEMBER 2020

Domestic primary aluminum production in December 2020 was 77,000 metric tons (t). The average daily production in December 2020 was 2,480 t, slightly more than that in November 2020, 16% less than that in December 2019, and 19% less than that in December 2018. Total primary aluminum production in 2020 was 1.01 million metric tons (Mt), 7% less than the amount in 2019 but 14% more than that in 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

Total aluminum recovered from scrap in December 2020 was 249,000 t, 6% less than that in November 2020, 8% less than that in December 2019, and 15% less than that in December 2018. Of this, 131,000 t of aluminum was recovered from new scrap, and 117,000 t was recovered from old scrap. Total aluminum recovered from scrap in 2020 was 3.19 Mt, 8% less than the amount in 2019 and 14% less than that in 2018. Secondary production from new scrap in 2020 was 1.72 Mt and from old scrap was 1.46 Mt (fig. 1, table 1).

and essentially unchanged from that in December 2018. The average cash price in December 2020 of primary aluminum ingot on the London Metal Exchange (LME) was \$0.915 per pound, 4% more than that in November 2020, 14% more than that in December 2019, and 5% more than that in December 2018. The 2020 average U.S. spot market price of primary aluminum ingot was \$0.897 per pound, 10% less than the 2019 annual average price and 22% less than the 2018 annual average price. The 2020 annual average cash price for primary aluminum ingot on the LME was \$0.772 per pound, 5% and 19% less than the annual average prices in 2019 and 2018, respectively (fig. 2, table 6).

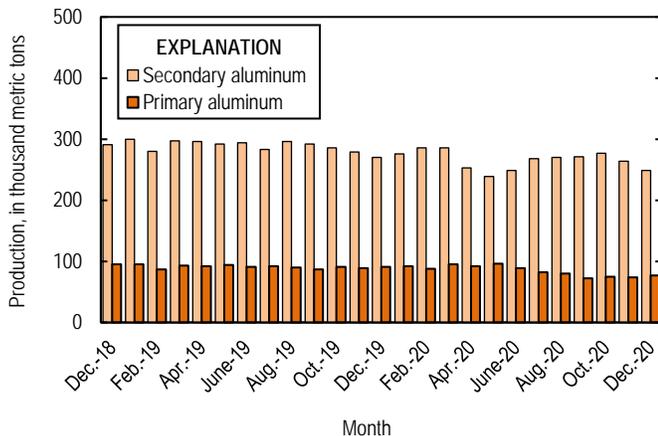


Figure 1. Monthly domestic primary and secondary aluminum production from December 2018 through December 2020.

Prices and Stocks

The December 2020 average U.S. spot market price of primary aluminum ingot was \$1.06 per pound, 5% more than that in November 2020, 12% more than that in December 2019,

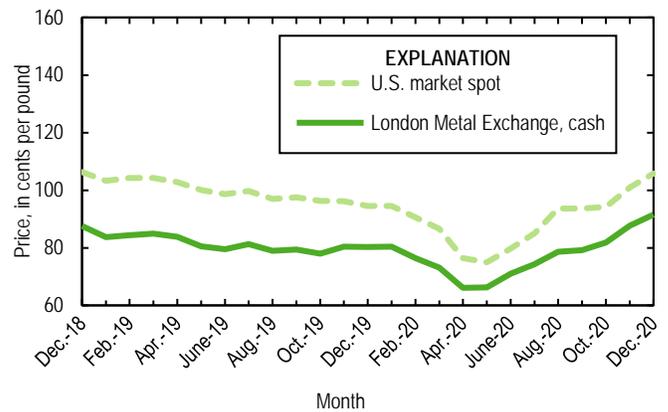


Figure 2. Average monthly prices for primary aluminum from December 2018 through December 2020. Source: S&P Global Platts Metals Week.

Inventories of primary aluminum in LME-approved warehouses, including off-warrant inventories, in the United States decreased to 209,251 t at the end of December from 210,981 t at the end of November. Inventories of secondary aluminum (North American Secondary Aluminum Alloy Contract) in LME-approved warehouses, including off-warrant inventories, in the United States decreased to 25,403 t at the end of December from 27,742 t at the end of November (London Metal Exchange Ltd., 2020a, b; 2021a, b).

U.S. Trade

Total imports for consumption of aluminum in 2020 (table 8) decreased by 15% compared with those in 2019. Imports of crude metal and alloys and semifabricated products decreased by 14% and 22%, respectively, and imports of scrap decreased slightly compared with imports in the prior year. Canada continued to be the leading source of imported aluminum materials, supplying 59% of all aluminum imports during 2020, followed by the United Arab Emirates (7%). Canada accounted for 70% of crude metal and alloys, 20% of semifabricated products, and 65% of scrap imports in 2020. The United Arab Emirates and Argentina accounted for 10% and 5%, respectively, of crude metal and alloy imports. China and Saudi Arabia accounted for 11% and 7%, respectively, of semifabricated product imports. Mexico was the source of 26% of scrap imports.

Total exports of aluminum (table 9) decreased by 8% during 2020 compared with those of the previous year. Exports of crude metal and alloys and semifabricated products decreased by 22% and 20%, respectively, and exports of scrap decreased slightly compared with those in 2019. The leading destinations for total aluminum products during 2020, in descending order of quantity, were Mexico (19%), Canada (17%), Malaysia (16%), India and the Republic of Korea (11% each). Scrap accounted for 68% of all aluminum exports in 2020.

Update

On February 1, 2021, the current President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, revoked the decision to exempt aluminum imports from the United Arab Emirates from the 10% tariff. On the morning of January 19, 2021, the previous President of the United States announced an exemption from the 10% tariff on aluminum imports from the United Arab

Emirates. (See Aluminum in November 2020.) The tariff on aluminum imports into the United States was imposed on March 23, 2018, under authority of Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. The exemption for imports from the United Arab Emirates would have been effective February 3, 2021 (Executive Office of the President, 2021).

References Cited

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TABLE 1
COMPONENTS OF ALUMINUM SUPPLY¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Primary production	Secondary recovery ²			Imports for consumption			Total new supply ³	Stocks, end of period ⁴
		New	Old	Total	Metals and alloys, crude	Plates, sheets, bars, etc.	Total		
2019	1,093	1,920	1,540	3,470	3,800	1,490	5,290	9,840	1,600
2019, December	91	149	121	270	317	95	412	773	1,600
2020: ^P									
January	92	151	125	276	347	111	458	827	1,650
February	88	161	124	286	261	93	354	727	1,580
March	95	158	127	286	308	102	410	790	1,590
April	92	133	120	253	338	87	425	770	1,590
May	96	128	111	239	316	80	396	730	1,530
June	89	132	117	249	262	88	350	688	1,430
July	82	146	122	268	253	84	337	687	1,410
August	80	144	126	270	270	85	355	705	1,410
September	72	147	124	271	214	79	293	637	1,400
October	75	150	127	277	231	80	311	663	1,450
November	74	141	122	264	241	80	321	658	1,430
December	77	131	117	249	229	78	307	632	NA
January–December	1,012	1,720	1,460	3,190	3,270	1,050	4,320	8,520	NA

^PPreliminary. NA Not available.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except "Primary production"; may not add to totals shown.

²Metallic recovery from purchased, tolled, or imported scrap, expanded for full coverage of industry.

³Primary production, secondary recovery, and imports for consumption.

⁴Inventory levels reflect total for U.S. and Canadian producers; data from the Aluminum Association Inc.

TABLE 2
ESTIMATED FULL COVERAGE CONSUMPTION OF AND METALLIC RECOVERY FROM
PURCHASED NEW AND OLD ALUMINUM SCRAP¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Secondary smelters		Independent mill fabricators		Foundries		Other consumers		Total	
	Consumption	Metal recovery	Consumption	Metal recovery	Consumption	Metal recovery	Consumption	Metal recovery	Consumption	Metal recovery
2019	2,300	1,750	1,770	1,620	101	93	4	4	4,170 ^r	3,470
2019, December	187	144	129	118	8	8	(2)	(2)	326	270
2020: ^p										
January	189	144	135	124	8	8	(2)	(2)	333	276
February	189	144	145	134	8	8	(2)	(2)	343	286
March	191	145	147	135	6	5	(2)	(2)	344	286
April	182	140	119	108	6	5	(2)	(2)	307	253
May	174	135	108	98	6	5	(2)	(2)	289	239
June	175	136	118	107	6	5	(2)	(2)	300	249
July	182	139	132	120	8	8	(2)	(2)	323	268
August	184	141	133	121	8	8	(2)	(2)	326	270
September	187	143	132	121	8	8	(2)	(2)	328	271
October	189	145	136	124	8	8	(2)	(2)	334	277
November	186	141	126	114	8	8	(2)	(2)	320	264
December	185	140	111	100	8	8	(2)	(2)	304	249
January–December	2,210	1,690	1,540	1,410	88	84	4	4	3,850	3,190

^pPreliminary. ^rRevised.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

TABLE 3
 CONSUMPTION OF AND RECOVERY FROM PURCHASED
 NEW AND OLD ALUMINUM SCRAP IN DECEMBER 2020¹

(Metric tons)

	Consumption		Calculated metallic recovery	
	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage
Secondary smelters	154,000	185,000	117,000	140,000
Independent mill fabricators	98,700	111,000	89,400	100,000
Foundries	7,040	8,450	6,440	7,730
Other consumers	273	328	273	328
Total	260,000	304,000	213,000	249,000

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

TABLE 4
PURCHASED AND TOLL-TREATED ALUMINUM-BASE SCRAP IN DECEMBER 2020¹

(Metric tons)

	December				January–December ²	
	Stocks, opening ²	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed	Stocks, closing	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed
New scrap:						
Extrusion	20,400	32,900	33,000	20,400	492,000	492,000
Can stock clippings	4,590	23,600	23,500	4,740	297,000	297,000
Other wrought sheet/clippings	6,360	31,900	29,200	9,080	398,000	403,000
Casting	3,550	5,900	5,900	3,550	70,200	70,200
Borings and turnings	4,890	16,300	16,200	4,950	178,000	178,000
Dross and skimmings	10,900	38,800	38,800	10,900	445,000	445,000
Total new scrap	50,700	149,000	147,000	53,600	1,880,000	1,890,000
Old scrap:						
Used castings	7,380	27,600	27,600	7,380	320,000	320,000
Used extrusion	7,320	17,600	17,600	7,320	211,000	211,000
Used cans (shredded, loose, baled)	9,290	39,900	39,700	9,520	476,000	476,000
Other wrought products	5,370	22,900	17,200	11,000	270,000	274,000
Fragmentized shredder (auto shredder)	4,300	12,000	11,800	4,500	143,000	142,000
Total old scrap	33,700	120,000	114,000	39,700	1,420,000	1,420,000
Total all classes	84,300	269,000	260,000	93,300	3,300,000	3,310,000

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

²May include revisions to previously published data.

³Includes data on imported aluminum-base scrap.

TABLE 5
ALUMINUM ALLOYS PRODUCED AT SECONDARY SMELTERS IN THE UNITED
STATES IN DECEMBER 2020^{1,2}

(Metric tons)

	December			January–December ³		
	Stocks, opening ³	Production	Net shipments	Stocks, closing	Production	Net shipments
Die-cast alloys:						
13% Si, 360, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	3,270	2,440	2,440	3,270	27,400	27,400
380 and variations	8,820	19,300	19,300	8,820	217,000	217,000
Sand and permanent mold:						
95/5 Al-Si, 356, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	2,180	3,020	3,020	2,180	33,800	33,800
No. 319 and variations	3,820	3,850	3,850	3,820	43,100	43,100
F-132 alloy and variations	182	249	249	182	2,790	2,790
Al-Zn alloys	467	81	81	467	908	908
Al-Si alloys (0.6% to 2.0% Cu)	219	133	133	219	1,490	1,490
Al-Cu alloys (1.5% Si, max.)	318	245	245	318	2,750	2,750
Other ⁴	7,560	10,000	10,000	7,560	112,000	112,000
Wrought alloys, extrusion billets	10,400	45,000	45,000	10,400	504,000	504,000
Total all alloys	37,200	84,400	84,400	37,200	945,000	945,000
Less:						
Primary aluminum consumed	XX	15,600	XX	XX	174,000	XX
Primary silicon consumed	XX	1,810	XX	XX	20,200	XX
Other alloying ingredients consumed	XX	795	XX	XX	8,910	XX
Net metallic recovery from aluminum scrap consumed in production of secondary aluminum ingot ⁵	XX	66,200	XX	XX	742,000	XX

XX Not applicable.

¹Excludes integrated aluminum companies.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

³May include revisions to previously published data.

⁴Includes alloys No. 12, Al-Mg, Al-Zn, Al-Cu, Al-Si-Cu-Ni, aluminum-base hardeners, variations of these alloys, plus other aluminum alloys.

⁵No allowance made for melt-loss of primary aluminum and alloying ingredients.

TABLE 6
 AVERAGE PRICE OF ALUMINUM IN THE UNITED STATES
 AND ON THE LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Cents per pound)

Period	Midwest U.S. market price	LME cash price Grade A
2019:		
December	94.488	80.288
January–December	99.537	81.256
2020:		
January	94.545	80.351
February	90.540	76.451
March	86.591	73.070
April	76.450	66.095
May	74.961	66.215
June	79.682	70.943
July	85.022	74.360
August	93.613	78.648
September	93.627	79.167
October	94.236	81.774
November	100.921	87.639
December	105.798	91.531
January–December	89.666	77.187

Source: S&P Global Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 7
AVERAGE BUYING PRICES FOR ALUMINUM SCRAP

(Cents per pound)

Month	Used beverage cans	Mixed low copper clips	Old sheet	Old cast	Turnings (clean and dry)
2019:					
December	53.12	39.00	35.48	34.98	27.12
January–December	54.95	45.96	40.88	39.85	33.59
2020:					
January	53.40	40.10	37.38	37.07	29.62
February	51.66	42.16	39.29	39.24	33.82
March	50.02	41.80	38.95	39.95	35.18
April	40.79	37.12	32.45	34.17	30.21
May	39.80	36.80	32.35	33.80	29.25
June	44.77	37.50	35.39	35.77	29.91
July	47.45	40.09	37.86	37.20	31.23
August	48.40	42.69	40.52	39.60	34.64
September	50.93	46.10	43.90	43.60	37.88
October	52.18	48.18	46.73	47.00	40.55
November	56.55	51.45	51.42	51.76	46.06
December	62.82	58.86	58.02	57.50	50.41
January–December	49.90	43.57	41.19	41.39	35.73

Source: Fastmarket-AMM.

TABLE 8
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ALUMINUM IN DECEMBER 2020¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	Metals and alloys, crude		Plates, sheets, bars, etc		Scrap		Total	
	December	January– December	December	January– December	December	January– December	December	January– December
Argentina	7,710	156,000	--	3	--	--	7,710	156,000
Australia	4,500	86,700	20	387	--	19	4,520	87,100
Austria	--	--	1,310	23,600	--	--	1,310	23,600
Bahrain	7,870	75,000	--	17,700	--	--	7,870	92,600
Belgium	1	151	603	5,730	--	--	604	5,880
Brazil	--	--	--	9,070	1,580	8,310	1,580	17,400
Canada	161,000	2,300,000	18,800	212,000	31,500	353,000	211,000	2,870,000
Chile	--	--	--	--	267	2,010	267	2,010
China	62	794	8,750	115,000	7	120	8,820	116,000
Colombia	--	--	553	6,590	352	1,120	905	7,720
Costa Rica	--	--	5	21	53	1,740	58	1,770
France	113	2,320	1,580	11,900	83	915	1,780	15,100
Germany	57	574	3,180	61,700	352	2,960	3,590	65,200
Greece	--	1	1,210	15,800	1	19	1,210	15,900
Guatemala	--	--	--	44	707	4,940	707	4,990
Honduras	--	--	425	5,080	43	161	468	5,240
Hong Kong	--	--	352	2,280	--	6	352	2,290
Iceland	--	566	--	--	--	--	--	566
India	2,260	90,700	788	22,700	--	343	3,040	114,000
Indonesia	--	--	1,330	20,100	--	--	1,330	20,100
Italy	--	296	1,420	20,800	--	1,010	1,420	22,100
Japan	--	--	2,170	14,900	28	775	2,200	15,700
Korea, Republic of	2,060	14,000	1,840	26,300	215	3,290	4,110	43,600
Malaysia	--	224	793	8,260	--	24	793	8,510
Mexico	295	705	4,900	36,700	11,800	142,000	17,000	180,000
Netherlands	24	1,050	203	5,140	181	1,510	408	7,700
New Zealand	--	6,850	1	7	--	--	1	6,850
Norway	--	155	756	4,140	--	--	756	4,300
Oman	--	99	5,000	63,000	--	--	5,000	63,100
Qatar	4,930	68,900	2	183	--	--	4,930	69,100
Romania	--	--	249	6,250	--	36	249	6,280
Russia	10,200	113,000	1,160	20,400	--	39	11,300	133,000
Saudi Arabia	--	5,450	4,810	70,900	--	--	4,810	76,300
South Africa	--	4,490	1,330	32,900	--	--	1,330	37,400
Spain	104	1,100	1,750	21,800	142	798	2,000	23,700
Sweden	--	--	588	6,820	--	7	588	6,820
Switzerland	--	--	352	5,910	--	--	352	5,910
Taiwan	7	351	781	24,600	19	272	807	25,200
Thailand	69	1,010	990	31,100	60	344	1,120	32,500
Turkey	5	13	1,880	39,800	--	--	1,880	39,800
United Arab Emirates	27,600	335,000	157	1,850	--	35	27,700	337,000
United Kingdom	10	339	190	4,670	671	4,100	871	9,110
Venezuela	--	25	--	--	--	--	--	25
Vietnam	--	--	2,410	23,700	5	17	2,420	23,700
Other	86	219	5,280	46,900	1,030	11,200	6,400	58,300
Total	229,000	3,270,000	77,900	1,050,000	49,000	542,000	356,000	4,860,000

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 9
U.S. EXPORTS OF ALUMINUM IN DECEMBER 2020¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	Metals and alloys, crude		Plates, sheets, bars, etc.		Scrap		Total	
	December	January– December	December	January– December	December	January– December	December	January– December
Australia	282	859	127	1,910	--	--	409	2,770
Belgium	--	25	46	271	582	6,820	628	7,120
Brazil	62	119	76	2,760	950	5,530	1,090	8,410
Canada	5,130	76,500	25,400	300,000	5,550	72,300	36,100	449,000
China	169	1,790	1,020	19,700	3,060	154,000	4,240	176,000
Colombia	101	107	22	717	42	192	165	1,020
Dominican Republic	--	10	43	299	189	622	232	931
France	10	348	374	6,720	59	1,140	443	8,210
Germany	--	250	112	4,900	298	8,440	410	13,600
Guatemala	--	3	8	69	--	--	8	72
Hong Kong	--	39	43	720	11,200	69,000	11,300	69,700
India	2	385	150	1,320	30,600	307,000	30,700	309,000
Indonesia	--	8	2	93	7,090	97,500	7,100	97,600
Ireland	--	3	44	564	--	67	44	634
Israel	2	14	1,280	17,200	--	--	1,280	17,200
Italy	--	178	115	1,380	195	5,130	310	6,690
Jamaica	--	81	2	61	--	16	2	158
Japan	10	1,120	285	11,900	2,260	19,900	2,560	32,800
Korea, Republic of	39	652	828	20,300	18,900	287,000	19,800	308,000
Malaysia	5	3,740	344	2,390	36,400	418,000	36,800	425,000
Mexico	8,270	91,400	21,300	265,000	16,700	152,000	46,300	509,000
Netherlands	6	107	15	367	400	2,710	421	3,190
New Zealand	--	--	48	521	--	19	48	540
Norway	--	1	--	20	--	--	--	21
Pakistan	--	39	--	16	1,550	13,800	1,550	13,900
Panama	--	13	7	41	--	--	7	54
Philippines	--	237	13	235	377	5,740	390	6,210
Poland	--	1	25	295	--	181	25	477
Romania	11	115	23	2,090	--	--	34	2,210
Russia	--	1	8	39	2,240	31,100	2,250	31,100
Saudi Arabia	--	13	41	525	117	1,840	158	2,370
Singapore	15	116	148	2,810	3	2,930	166	5,860
Spain	4	21	25	416	323	5,910	352	6,350
Taiwan	246	2,640	530	4,260	3,700	42,700	4,470	49,600
Thailand	--	7	36	779	8,270	74,000	8,300	74,800
Turkey	--	34	111	3,590	609	9,690	720	13,300
United Arab Emirates	--	4	96	742	455	8,780	551	9,530
United Kingdom	--	345	406	6,360	347	3,050	753	9,760
Vietnam	--	166	58	1,250	1,510	17,200	1,570	18,600
Other	21	702	280	4,050	1,820	20,800	2,130	25,600
Total	14,400	182,000	53,500	687,000	156,000	1,850,000	224,000	2,720,000

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.