

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE SECOND QUARTER 2020

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the second quarter of 2020 were 834,000 metric tons (t), 8% more than those in the first quarter of 2020, 24% less than those in the second quarter of 2019, and 11% less than those in the second quarter of 2018 (fig. 1). Jamaica (80%) and Sierra Leone (16%) were the leading sources of crude and dried bauxite imports in the second quarter of 2020 (table 1).

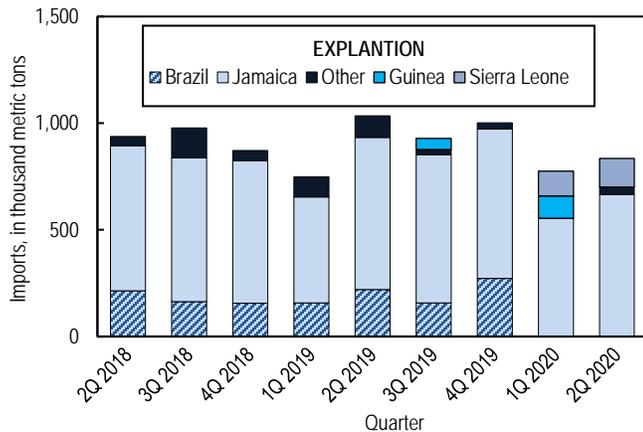


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the second quarter of 2018 through the second quarter of 2020. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the second quarter of 2020 were 361,000 t, essentially unchanged from those in the first quarter of 2020, slightly less than the amount in the second quarter of 2019, but slightly more than those in the second quarter of 2018 (fig. 2). The leading sources of imported alumina in the second quarter of 2020 were Brazil (55%), Jamaica (20%), and Australia (14%) (table 3).

Exports of alumina during the second quarter of 2020 were 35,900 t, 7% less than those in the first quarter of 2020, 12% less than those in the second quarter of 2019, and 65% less than those in the second quarter of 2018 (fig. 2). The leading

destinations for alumina exported in the second quarter of 2020 were Mexico (38%) and Canada (13%) (table 3).

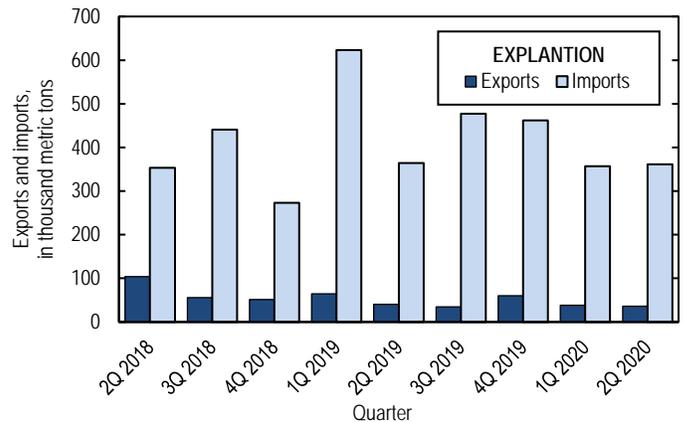


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the second quarter of 2018 through the second quarter of 2020. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

In August, LAlumina LLC, subsidiary of Arthur Metals LLC, shut down the 500,000-metric-ton-per-year alumina refinery in Burnside, LA, citing high production costs and low prices for alumina. The refinery produced chemical grade and speciality alumina for use by non-metallurgical consumers. Consumption of speciality grade alumina decreased with the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 300 employees were laid off (Mosbrucker, 2020).

On August 18, Hydro ASA shut down production from the Paragominas Mine in Brazil, citing damage to the pipeline used to transport bauxite to the Alumina do Norte do Brasil S.A. (Alunorte) alumina refinery in Barcarena, Brazil. Routine inspection of the pipeline discovered that it had deteriorated more than expected and it was shut down immediately for repair. The repair work was expected to be completed in about two months. Production at the 9.9-million-metric-tons-per-year (Mt/yr) bauxite mine will not resume until the repairs are completed.

Production from the 6.3-Mt/yr Alunorte alumina refinery was decreased to 35 to 40% of its capacity, a rate of 2.2 to 2.5 Mt/yr, until the pipeline is repaired (Hydro ASA, 2020; Lazzaro and Ribeiro, 2020).

References Cited

Hydro ASA, 2020, Hydro Paragominas bauxite pipeline in Brazil halted for extended maintenance: Oslo, Norway, Hydro ASA press release, August 18. (Accessed August 27, 2020, at <https://www.hydro.com/en-US/media/news/2020/hydro-paragominas-bauxite-pipeline-in-brazil-halted-for-extended-maintenance/>.)

Lazzaro, Nick, and Ribeiro, Henrique, 2020, Alunorte's alumina output to be cut 35% on pipeline repairs—Hydro: Platts Metals Daily, v. 9, no. 162, August 18, p. 1–2.

Mosbrucker, Kristen, 2020, A Louisiana plant expects to close, laying off hundreds despite 'paycheck protection' program: The Advocate [Baton Rouge, LA], July 7. (Accessed August 26, 2020, at https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/business/article_90f4e216-c089-11ea-8f35-0f9296ae99f2.html.)

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TABLE 1
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CRUDE AND DRIED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2019	2020		
		1st quarter	2d quarter	1st quarter– 2d quarter
Imports for consumption:				
Brazil	806,000	--	--	--
Guinea	52,800	104,000	--	104,000
Jamaica ²	2,610,000	554,000	666,000	1,220,000
Sierra Leone	--	116,000	134,000	249,000
Turkey	239,000	--	35,000	35,000
Other	7,150	729	--	729
Total	3,710,000	775,000	834,000	1,610,000
Exports:				
Canada	2,120	652	222	874
Other	1,100	403	293	696
Total	3,220	1,060	515	1,570

-- Zero.

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

²Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CALCINED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2020							
	2019		1st quarter		2d quarter		1st quarter– 2d quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports for consumption:								
Australia	--	213,000	--	49,700	--	49,500	--	99,200
China	16,900	11,900	15,100	89	5,820	3,050	20,900	3,140
Guyana	51,600	133,000	5,440	51,300	7,250	13,900	12,700	65,200
India	125	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	738	3,620	366	6	360	74	726	80
Total	69,300	361,000	20,900	101,000	13,400	66,500	34,300	168,000
Exports:								
Canada	4,170	--	1,260	--	656	--	1,920	--
China	1,510	--	241	--	503	--	744	--
Mexico	845	--	246	--	897	--	1,140	--
Other	714	36	308	--	235	40	543	40
Total	7,240	36	2,050	--	2,290	40	4,350	40

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF ALUMINA, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons, calcined equivalent)

Country or locality	2019	2020		
		1st quarter	2d quarter	1st quarter– 2d quarter
Imports for consumption:²				
Australia	459,000	48,700	49,400	98,100
Brazil	1,010,000	233,000	197,000	430,000
Canada	78,500	17,100	13,600	30,700
Jamaica ³	217,000	33,800	71,000	105,000
Other	164,000	24,500	29,400	53,900
Total	1,930,000	357,000	361,000	718,000
Exports:⁴				
Canada	30,500 [†]	8,290	4,720	13,000
Iceland	20,800	--	--	--
Mexico	42,300	10,700	13,700	24,500
Netherlands	14,600	1,480	1,080	2,560
Venezuela	20,800	--	--	--
Other	71,100	18,000	16,300	34,300
Total	200,000	38,500	35,900	74,300

[†]Revised. -- Zero.

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

²Includes imports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 402,000 (revised) metric tons (t) in 2019; 80,600 (revised) t in the first quarter of 2020; 74,200 t in the second quarter of 2020.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 83,300 (revised) t in 2019; 21,100 t in the first quarter of 2020; 25,500 t in the second quarter of 2020.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.