

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

E. Lee Bray, Aluminum Commodity Specialist
 National Minerals Information Center
 U.S. Geological Survey
 989 National Center
 Reston, VA 20192
 Telephone: (703) 648-4979, Fax: (703) 648-7757
 Email: lbray@usgs.gov

Susan M. Weaver (Data)
 Telephone: (703) 648-7979
 Fax: (703) 648-7995
 Email: sweaver@usgs.gov

Internet: <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/>

ALUMINUM IN FEBRUARY 2018

Domestic primary aluminum production in February 2018 was 61,000 metric tons (t). The average daily production in February was 2,180 t, slightly more than that in January 2018, 8% more than that in February 2017, but 26% less than that in February 2016 (fig. 1, table 1).

Total aluminum recovered from scrap in February 2018 was 291,000 t, slightly less than the revised amount in January 2018, 3% less than the revised amount in February 2017, and slightly less than the amount in February 2016. Of this, 166,000 t of aluminum was recovered from new scrap and 125,000 t was recovered from old scrap (fig. 1, table 1).

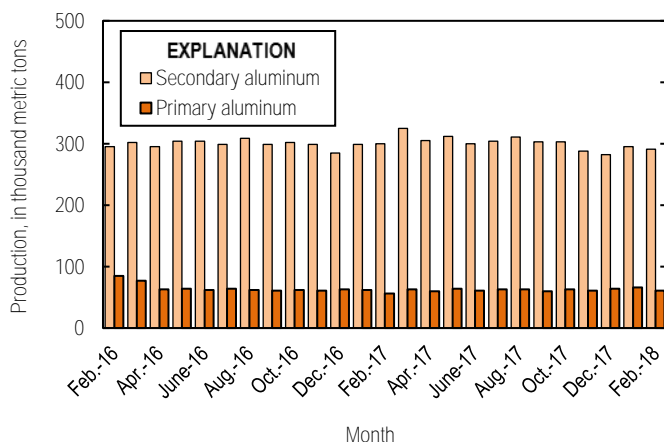


Figure 1. Monthly domestic primary and secondary aluminum production from February 2016 through February 2018. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Prices and Stocks

The February 2018 average U.S. market price of primary aluminum ingot increased slightly but the average cash price on the LME decreased slightly from those in January 2018 to \$1.121 per pound and \$0.991 per pound, respectively (fig. 2, table 6).

Inventories of primary aluminum in LME-approved warehouses in the United States decreased to 61,500 t at the end

of February 2018 from 63,775 t at the end of January 2018 (London Metal Exchange Ltd., 2018a, b).

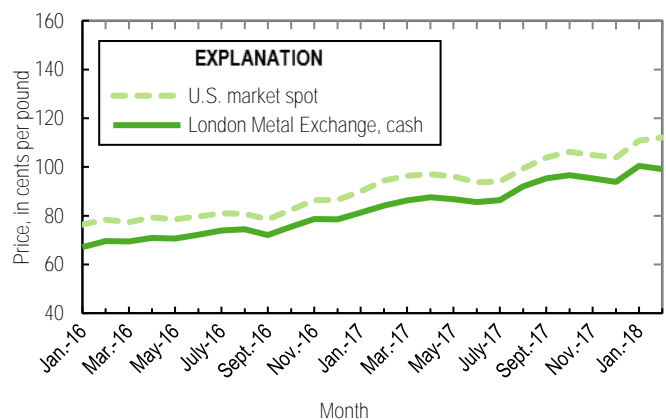


Figure 2. Average monthly prices for primary aluminum from February 2016 through February 2018. Source: Platts Metals Week.

Update

On March 22, the President of the United States exempted Argentina, Australia, Brazil, the Republic of Korea, and the European Union from the 10% tariff on aluminum imports imposed on March 8 under authority of Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. Canada and Mexico were exempted previously. (See Aluminum in January 2018.) The temporary exemptions last until May 1 and are based on condition of satisfactory alternative means of addressing the threatened impairment to national security by aluminum imports (White House, The, 2018).

The Government of China imposed a 25% tariff on scrap aluminum imports from the United States in response to tariffs placed on aluminum and steel by the United States on March 8. The tariff took effect April 2 and was applied to all aluminum not previously cleared by customs officials. Scrap imported to China for sorting and re-export was exempt from the tariff (Macauley, 2018; Watanabe, 2018).

On April 6, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, in consultation with the U.S. Department of State, designated several Russian individuals and businesses for sanctions in response to activities of the Government of the Russian Federation. Among those designated were United Company RUSAL Plc, EN+ Group (which owns or controls RUSAL), and Oleg Deripaska, the chairman and chief executive officer of RUSAL. RUSAL owns all primary aluminum smelters and alumina refineries in Russia. All assets subject to U.S. jurisdiction of those sanctioned were frozen, and U.S. persons were generally prohibited from doing business with sanctioned individuals or businesses. The Department of the Treasury authorized a wind-down period until June 5 for contracts and deliveries but payments must be deposited into frozen accounts in financial institutions in the United States. On April 23, the wind-down period for agreements entered prior to April 6 was extended until October 23. RUSAL petitioned the Department of the Treasury to remove the sanctions against its products. In response to the sanctions, the London Metal Exchange (LME) announced that it would suspend putting aluminum produced by RUSAL on warrant, initially effective April 17 but then the effective date was changed to October 23 and only contracts entered prior to April 6 were eligible for the extended wind-down period. The LME also stated that it would consider delisting or suspending RUSAL brands. CME Group stopped accepting aluminum produced in Russia for delivery or registration at its warehouses effective April 10 to comply with the sanctions (Butt, 2018; Grenham, 2018; McBeth, 2018; U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2018a, b).

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced its preliminary determination of the antidumping and countervailing duty investigations of common aluminum alloy sheet, initiated in November 2017. The alloys that were the subject of the investigation included 1000-series, 3000-series, and 5000-series, but did not include can stock alloys. The investigation included flat-rolled products with a thickness greater than 0.2 millimeters and up to 6.3 millimeters. (See Aluminum in October 2017.) Countervailing margins were set at 32.2% to 113.3%. The antidumping duties were scheduled to be announced on June 12 (Barker, 2018; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2017).

The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) proposed a 25% tariff on aluminum alloys, semifabricated aluminum products, and unwrought aluminum produced in China following its Section 301 investigation. Written public comments concerning the proposed tariff were to be submitted to the USTR before May 11, and a public hearing would be held on May 15 (Teo, 2018).

Alcoa Corp. continued with the restart of production from the Warrick smelter near Evansville, IN. Three of the five potlines were being put back into production at the 269,000-metric-ton-per-year (t/yr) smelter; the capacity of the potlines put into production was 161,400 t/yr. (See Aluminum in November 2017.) Production from the first potline started in December 2017 and, by the end of March 2018, all three potlines were restarted. All three potlines were scheduled to be ramped up by the end of June 2018 (Alcoa Corp., 2018, p. 5; Matyi, 2018).

Norsk Hydro ASA (Norway) temporarily shut down 230,000 t/yr of capacity at the 460,000-t/yr Albras aluminum smelter in Barcarena, Brazil, citing a shortage of alumina. In March, Hydro temporarily shut down one-half of the capacity at the adjacent 6.3-million-metric-ton-per-year Alunorte alumina refinery,

citing high water levels in the red mud impoundment after heavy rainfall. (See Bauxite and Alumina in the Fourth Quarter 2017.) The Albras smelter, a joint venture between Hydro (51%) and Nippon Amazon Aluminium Co. Ltd. (49%), would be restarted to full production once the Alunorte refinery resumes full production (Carvalho, 2018; Norsk Hydro ASA, 2018).

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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		
2017 ^p	741	2,050 ^r	1,590	3,630 ^r	4,830	1,380	6,200	10,600	1,470
2017:									
February	56	170 ^r	130	300 ^r	394	90	484	840 ^r	1,290
March	63	180 ^r	145	325 ^r	476	111	587	974 ^r	1,310
April	60	171 ^r	135	305 ^r	434	113	547	912 ^r	1,320
May	64	176 ^r	137	312 ^r	411	133	544	920 ^r	1,340
June	61	170 ^r	130	300 ^r	409	119	528	890 ^r	1,330
July	63	170 ^r	133	304 ^r	411	130	541	908 ^r	1,360
August	63	174 ^r	137	311 ^r	379	121	500	874 ^r	1,390
September	60	170 ^r	134	303 ^r	338	102	440	804 ^r	1,420
October	63	172 ^r	131	303 ^r	358	122	480	846 ^r	1,430
November	61	166 ^r	122	288 ^r	358	116	474	822 ^r	1,420
December	64	165 ^r	117	282 ^r	400	118	518	864 ^r	1,470
January–February	119	333	266	599	852	190	1,040	1,760	1,470
2018:									
January	66	168	126 ^r	295 ^r	333	167	500	861 ^r	1,460
February	61	166	125	291	374	99	473	825	NA
January–February	127	334	251	585	707	266	973	1,690	NA

^pPreliminary. ^rRevised. 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 both 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	
	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery
	2017 ^p	2,100 ^r	1,650	2,060 ^r	1,880	101	93	4	4	4,260 ^r
2017:										
February	170 ^r	135	171	156	8	8	(2)	(2)	350 ^r	300 ^r
March	179	140 ^r	194 ^r	177 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	382 ^r	325 ^r
April	175 ^r	137	175	160	8	8	(2)	(2)	359 ^r	305 ^r
May	178	141 ^r	179	164 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	367 ^r	312 ^r
June	167	131 ^r	176	161	8	8	(2)	(2)	353 ^r	300 ^r
July	174	138 ^r	172	158 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	356 ^r	304 ^r
August	177 ^r	140 ^r	179 ^r	163	8	8	(2)	(2)	364 ^r	311 ^r
September	172 ^r	136	173	159 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	354 ^r	303 ^r
October	179	141 ^r	169 ^r	154	8	8	(2)	(2)	357 ^r	303 ^r
November	175 ^r	138	154	141	8	8	(2)	(2)	338 ^r	288 ^r
December	174	138	148	136 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	331 ^r	282 ^r
January–February	346	274	339	309	17	15	1	1	702	599
2018:										
January	171 ^r	136 ^r	164	150	8	8	(2)	(2)	344 ^r	295 ^r
February	164	130	166	153	8	8	(2)	(2)	339	291
January–February	335	266	330	303	17	15	1	1	683	585

^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 FEBRUARY 2018¹

(Metric tons)

	Consumption		Calculated metallic recovery	
	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage
	Secondary smelters	137,000	164,000	108,000
Independent mill fabricators	153,000	166,000	140,000	153,000
Foundries	7,040	8,450	6,440	7,730
Other consumers	266	320	266	320
Total	297,000	339,000	256,000	291,000

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 AND SWEATED
PIG IN FEBRUARY 2018¹

(Metric tons)

	February			January–February ²		
	Stocks, opening ²	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed	Stocks, closing	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed
New scrap:						
Extrusion	14,800	70,900	70,600	15,200	140,000	140,000
Can stock clippings	7,680	21,200	21,300	7,600	43,300	43,200
Other wrought sheet/clippings	15,300	35,500	38,700	12,100	79,700	79,100
Casting	3,880	5,630	5,650	3,870	11,300	11,200
Borings and turnings	3,430	10,100	10,100	3,340	19,600	20,400
Dross and skimmings	6,310	27,700	27,700	6,310	55,800	55,800
Total new scrap	51,400	171,000	174,000	48,400	350,000	350,000
Old scrap:						
Used castings	8,420	24,700	24,500	8,550	48,900	48,900
Used extrusion	6,690	13,700	13,000	7,360	27,500	28,000
Used cans (shredded, loose, baled)	6,210	48,800	48,900	6,080	96,300	96,400
Other wrought products	19,300	25,600	28,500	16,400	55,600	58,400
Fragmentized shredder (auto shredder)	2,530	8,000	7,740	2,800	15,700	15,400
Total old scrap	43,200	121,000	123,000	41,200	244,000	247,000
Sweated pig	183	151	151	183	302	302
Total all classes	94,800	292,000	297,000	89,700	594,000	597,000

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 FEBRUARY 2018^{1,2}

(Metric tons)

	February				January-February	
	Stocks, opening ³	Production	Net shipments	Stocks, closing	Production	Net shipments
Die-cast alloys:						
13% Si, 360, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	2,000	2,500	2,500	2,000	5,010	5,010
380 and variations	7,180	15,200	15,200	7,180	30,300	30,300
Sand and permanent mold:						
95/5 Al-Si, 356, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	1,460	4,180	4,180	1,460	8,370	8,370
No. 319 and variations	3,190	3,530	3,530	3,190	7,060	7,070
F-132 alloy and variations	663	347	347	663	694	694
Al-Zn alloys	243	120	120	243	240	240
Al-Si alloys (0.6% to 2.0% Cu)	103	92	92	103	184	184
Al-Cu alloys (1.5% Si, max.)	178	67	67	178	135	135
Other ⁴	5,150	10,800	10,600	5,280	21,700	21,000
Wrought alloys, extrusion billets	22,600	64,100	65,300	21,400	129,000	128,000
Total all alloys	42,800	101,000	102,000	41,700	203,000	201,000
Less:						
Primary aluminum consumed	XX	17,700	XX	XX	35,800	XX
Primary silicon consumed	XX	2,170	XX	XX	4,380	XX
Other alloying ingredients consumed	XX	1,240	XX	XX	2,530	XX
Net metallic recovery from aluminum scrap and sweated pig consumed in production of secondary aluminum ingot ⁵	XX	79,700	XX	XX	160,000	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-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
2017:		
February	94.375	84.207
March	96.370	86.233
April	96.972	87.571
May	96.071	86.803
June	93.761	85.559
July	93.964	86.329
August	99.330	92.062
September	103.810	95.261
October	106.198	96.616
November	104.852	95.280
December	103.908	93.911
January–December	98.298	89.254
2018:		
January	110.830	100.429
February	112.050	99.091
January–February	111.440	99.760

Source: 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)
2017:					
February	72.37	62.47	58.00	59.68	58.89
March	73.35	65.91	60.96	61.96	60.52
April	71.55	66.00	61.75	62.75	61.15
May	68.27	64.50	60.05	61.05	60.36
June	67.23	63.14	58.77	59.77	59.68
July	67.05	62.00	57.85	59.00	59.00
August	70.98	62.91	57.30	58.35	59.00
September	73.12	65.00	58.40	58.95	58.90
October	74.09	65.00	58.00	58.77	58.00
November	72.88	64.08	57.65	59.00	56.60
December	69.95	62.55	56.50	57.95	54.70
January–December	70.93	63.62	58.44	59.63	58.62
2018:					
January	75.57	63.48	58.90	59.90	56.36
February	75.66	65.29	61.21	62.21	58.45
January–February	75.62	64.39	60.06	61.06	57.41

Source: American Metal Market.

TABLE 8
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ALUMINUM IN FEBRUARY 2018¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	Metals and alloys, crude		Plates, sheets, bars, etc.		Scrap		Total	
	February	January– February	February	January– February	February	January– February	February	January– February
Argentina	25,500	26,300	2	2	--	--	25,500	26,300
Australia	3,480	15,200	1	59	120	331	3,600	15,600
Austria	--	--	2,320	4,770	(2)	(2)	2,320	4,770
Bahrain	10,500	23,600	4,050	8,550	--	--	14,500	32,100
Belgium	132	254	877	1,560	--	--	1,010	1,810
Brazil	914	1,290	2,570	4,000	--	49	3,490	5,340
Canada	158,000	310,000	22,800	47,000	29,800	59,900	210,000	417,000
Chile	--	--	--	--	783	1,140	783	1,140
China	1,200	1,510	24,800	106,000	86	341	26,100	108,000
Colombia	--	--	634	1,260	90	107	724	1,370
Costa Rica	--	--	--	--	320	650	320	650
El Salvador	--	--	71	126	229	555	300	681
France	1,200	5,870	3,090	5,490	384	497	4,670	11,900
Germany	27	161	2,620	5,950	179	509	2,830	6,620
Greece	--	--	994	2,790	--	--	994	2,790
Guatemala	--	--	--	--	619	1,710	619	1,710
Honduras	--	--	--	--	198	321	198	321
Hong Kong	--	--	742	1,680	124	124	866	1,810
India	21,500	37,800	3,410	6,700	--	--	24,900	44,500
Indonesia	--	--	4,630	11,600	--	--	4,630	11,600
Italy	--	--	800	1,780	--	--	800	1,780
Japan	--	--	2,840	5,710	34	60	2,870	5,770
Korea, Republic of	--	--	1,280	2,430	870	1,510	2,150	3,950
Malaysia	--	--	702	1,450	--	--	702	1,450
Mexico	2,120	3,730	3,780	7,540	11,200	23,800	17,100	35,100
Netherlands	184	253	281	633	--	11	465	897
New Zealand	829	1,930	(2)	(2)	--	--	829	1,930
Norway	10,500	10,500	22	59	--	--	10,600	10,600
Oman	650	1,630	2,320	4,660	--	--	2,970	6,290
Qatar	9,020	15,000	(2)	1	--	--	9,020	15,000
Romania	--	--	177	345	--	--	177	345
Russia	33,000	94,300	1,620	3,770	--	--	34,600	98,100
Saudi Arabia	9,810	13,600	1,190	4,250	121	374	11,100	18,200
South Africa	35,400	43,400	2,060	9,080	--	--	37,500	52,500
Spain	20	271	249	481	660	1,080	929	1,830
Sweden	--	--	532	1,050	--	--	532	1,050
Switzerland	--	--	310	610	--	--	310	610
Taiwan	19	40	793	1,190	78	359	890	1,580
Thailand	69	138	378	1,280	58	192	505	1,610
Turkey	--	--	1,210	2,330	391	639	1,610	2,970
United Arab Emirates	38,700	79,600	64	223	367	648	39,200	80,400
United Kingdom	39	61	159	342	293	585	491	988
Venezuela	11,200	20,400	139	354	272	382	11,600	21,100
Vietnam	59	129	3,000	5,790	4	9	3,070	5,930
Other	137	499	1,480	3,190	1,450	3,780	3,060	7,470
Total	374,000	707,000	99,000	266,000	48,700	99,700	522,000	1,070,000

-- Zero.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 9
U.S. EXPORTS OF ALUMINUM IN FEBRUARY 2018¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	Metals and alloys, crude		Plates, sheets, bars, etc.		Scrap		Total	
	February	January– February	February	January– February	February	January– February	February	January– February
Australia	50	90	108	323	--	3	158	416
Belgium	20	20	41	121	258	436	319	577
Bolivia	--	--	303	509	--	--	303	509
Brazil	18	19	254	468	396	486	668	973
Canada	10,500	21,100	32,700	69,300	8,210	16,800	51,500	107,000
China	172	567	2,600	5,270	59,200	111,000	61,900	117,000
Colombia	--	--	138	322	15	15	153	337
Dominican Republic	214	337	106	215	--	--	320	552
France	323	1,120	1,010	2,000	213	386	1,540	3,500
Germany	92	188	361	894	781	1,600	1,230	2,680
Guatemala	--	--	532	1,130	--	--	532	1,130
Hong Kong	--	--	94	246	1,640	3,510	1,730	3,750
India	25	43	225	310	7,630	16,100	7,880	16,400
Indonesia	(2)	2	87	146	4,690	7,610	4,780	7,750
Ireland	8	8	34	76	--	--	42	84
Israel	1	1	760	1,370	26	26	787	1,400
Italy	8	8	91	180	--	--	99	188
Jamaica	6	6	6	7	--	--	12	13
Japan	72	264	1,060	1,900	1,330	2,860	2,460	5,030
Korea, Republic of	19	136	2,520	5,370	15,600	31,300	18,200	36,800
Malaysia	9	9	418	894	7,440	13,900	7,870	14,800
Mexico	15,400	27,900	36,300	74,800	12,900	24,900	64,600	128,000
Netherlands	43	50	30	65	368	489	441	604
New Zealand	--	6	72	149	--	--	72	155
Norway	--	--	4	23	--	--	4	23
Pakistan	--	--	19	22	411	752	430	774
Panama	--	--	8	11	--	--	8	11
Philippines	--	--	62	88	254	315	316	403
Poland	4	10	44	125	171	171	219	306
Romania	7	17	37	45	--	--	44	62
Russia	14	14	11	35	1,350	3,240	1,370	3,280
Saudi Arabia	--	--	169	316	--	--	169	316
Singapore	54	158	437	894	22	22	513	1,070
Spain	--	8	69	152	182	351	251	511
Taiwan	1,240	1,630	881	1,720	2,710	5,200	4,830	8,550
Thailand	--	--	460	670	571	1,220	1,030	1,890
Turkey	2	2	317	597	92	92	411	691
United Arab Emirates	27	274	100	105	110	128	237	507
United Kingdom	48	57	1,090	1,790	136	217	1,280	2,060
Vietnam	--	--	12	21	123	299	135	320
Other	21	46	341	747	486	669	848	1,460
Total	28,400	54,000	83,900	173,000	127,000	244,000	240,000	471,000

-- Zero.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.