

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE FOURTH QUARTER 2017

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the fourth quarter of 2017 were 910,000 metric tons (t), slightly less than those in the third quarter of 2017, 4% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2016, and 61% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2015 (fig. 1). Jamaica (68%) and Brazil (23%) were the leading sources of crude and dried bauxite imports in the fourth quarter of 2017. Crude and dried bauxite imports in 2017 were 3.43 million metric tons (Mt), 32% less than those in 2016 and 68% less than those in 2015 (table 1).

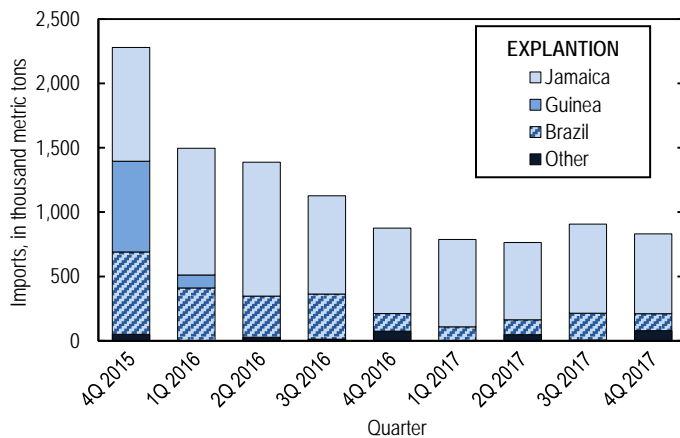


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the fourth quarter of 2015 through the fourth quarter of 2017. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the fourth quarter of 2017 were 355,000 t, 3% less than those in the third quarter of 2017, 34% more than that in the fourth quarter of 2016, and 26% more than the amount in the fourth quarter of 2015 (fig. 2). The leading sources of imported alumina in the fourth quarter of 2017 were Brazil (44%), Australia (28%), and Jamaica (13%). Alumina

imports in 2017 were 1.33 Mt, 17% more than those in 2016 but 87% less than those in 2015 (table 3).

Exports of alumina during the fourth quarter of 2017 were 121,000 t, 17% more than those in the third quarter of 2017, 32% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2016, and 80% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2015 (fig. 2). The leading destinations for alumina exported in the fourth quarter of 2017 were India (26%), Iceland (26%), Mexico (11%), China (10%) and the Netherlands (10%). Alumina exports in 2017 were 481,000 t, 64% less than those in 2016 and 78% less than those in 2015 (table 3).

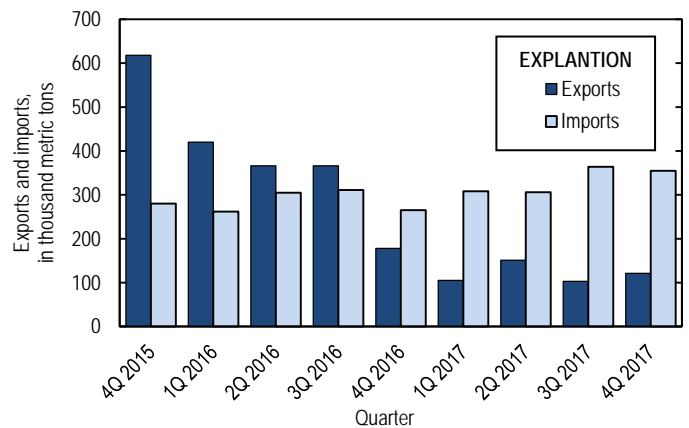


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the fourth quarter of 2015 through the fourth quarter of 2017. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

Norsk Hydro ASA was ordered by environmental regulators to temporarily shut down one-half of the 6.3-million-metric-ton-per-year capacity of the Alunorte alumina refinery in Barcarena, Brazil on February 27, 2018. Heavy rainfall on February 16 and

17 resulted in high water levels in one of the refinery's waste disposal impounds. Monitoring of the impounds did not detect any leaking or failure, but the water level in one reached a dangerous point, prompting the order to shut down some production. On February 28, regulators also ordered Norsk Hydro to stop using one of the two tailings impounds at the Paragominas bauxite mine located approximately 250 kilometers west of the refinery because of high water levels after the heavy rainfall (Norsk Hydro ASA, 2018a, b, c).

References Cited

Norsk Hydro ASA, 2018a, Court orders Alunorte to cut production by 50% and halt operations at DRS2 bauxite residue disposal: Oslo, Norway, Norsk Hydro ASA press release, March 1. (Accessed March 9, 2018, at <https://www.hydro.com/en/press-room/Archive/2018/alunorte-situations->

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TABLE 1
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CRUDE AND DRIED BAUXITE¹

(Metric tons)

Country or Locality	2016	2017				1st quarter– 4th quarter
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	
Imports (for consumption):						
Brazil	1,340,000	109,000	164,000	215,000	211,000	699,000
Guinea	101,000	--	--	--	--	--
Jamaica ²	3,460,000	679,000	600,000	692,000	620,000	2,590,000
Other	118,000	2,550	47,600	7,330	79,000	137,000
Total	5,010,000	790,000	812,000	914,000	910,000	3,430,000
Exports:						
Canada	4,000	352	1,130	1,120	813	3,410
Mexico	19	153	40	--	--	193
Other	901	146	543	460	402	1,550
Total	4,920	651	1,710	1,580	1,220	5,160

-- 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	2017											
	2016		1st quarter		2d quarter		3d quarter		4th quarter		1st quarter– 4th quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports (for consumption):												
Australia	--	170,000	--	49,500	--	51,800	--	49,500	--	8,600	--	159,000
Brazil	547	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
China	53,000	13,300	17,300	2,900	13,300	5,550	9,370	2,950	31,700	6,790	71,700	18,200
Guyana	28,500	242,000	11,300	24,100	11,000	64,700	16,700	34,300	16,300	22,000	55,300	145,000
India	3,290	300	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	547	--	547
Turkey	--	25,000	--	--	--	35,300	--	33,400	--	32,800	--	101,000
Other	1,210	36,200 ^r	--	19,100	--	356	--	152	--	8,490	--	28,100
Total	86,500	487,000^r	28,600	95,500	24,300	158,000	26,100	120,000	48,000	79,200	127,000	453,000
Exports:												
Canada	2,990	--	934	--	1,230	--	1,190	--	1,080	--	4,430	--
China	13,500	--	7,440	--	1,130	--	300	--	200	--	9,070	--
Mexico	2,830	40	53	--	55	--	28 ^r	--	559	--	695	--
Other	473	82	173	--	207	--	84 ^r	1	236	101	700	102
Total	19,800	122	8,600	--	2,620	--	1,600^r	1	2,080	101	14,900	102

^rRevised. -- 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 ALUMINA¹

(Metric tons, calcined equivalent)

Country or Locality	2017					1st quarter– 4th quarter
	2016	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	
Imports (for consumption):²						
Australia	374,000	98,500	96,200	98,200	99,800	393,000
Brazil	400,000	117,000	122,000	149,000	155,000	543,000
Jamaica ³	164,000	35,600	32,200	55,500	45,400	169,000
Suriname	34,900	--	--	--	--	--
Other	171,000	56,600	56,400	61,700	54,300	229,000
Total	1,140,000	308,000	306,000	364,000	355,000	1,330,000
Exports:⁴						
Canada	85,700	11,900	9,010	6,560	8,010	35,400
China	73,700	968	1,970	1,350	12,400	16,700
Egypt	59,900	16	21	1	(5)	38
Iceland	395,000	--	31,100	--	31,500	62,600
India	1,980	401	519	552	31,900	33,400
Mexico	77,000	11,400	11,300	12,300	13,200	48,200
Netherlands	120,000	27,500	26,100	29,400	12,000	95,000
Russia	63,000	157	58,200	31,600	38	90,000
Sweden	32,300	218	227	202	277	924
United Arab Emirates	282,000	31,800	530	65	332	32,800
Other	139,000 [†]	20,700 [†]	11,900 [†]	21,300 [†]	11,700	65,700
Total	1,330,000	105,000	151,000	103,000	121,000	481,000

[†]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: 224,000 metric tons (t) in 2016; 94,400 t in the first quarter of 2017; 97,200 t in the second quarter of 2017; 130,000 t in the third quarter of 2017; 94,600 t in the fourth quarter.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 105,000 t in 2016; 18,100 t in the first quarter of 2017; 21,100 t in the second quarter of 2017; 18,500 t in the third quarter of 2017; 16,800 t in the fourth quarter of 2017.

⁵Less than ½ unit.

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