

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE SECOND QUARTER 2018

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the second quarter of 2018 were 917,000 metric tons (t), 41% more than those in the first quarter of 2018, 13% more than those in the second quarter of 2017, and 35% less than those in the second quarter of 2016 (fig. 1). Jamaica (74%) and Brazil (23%) were the leading sources of crude and dried bauxite imports in the second quarter of 2018 (table 1).

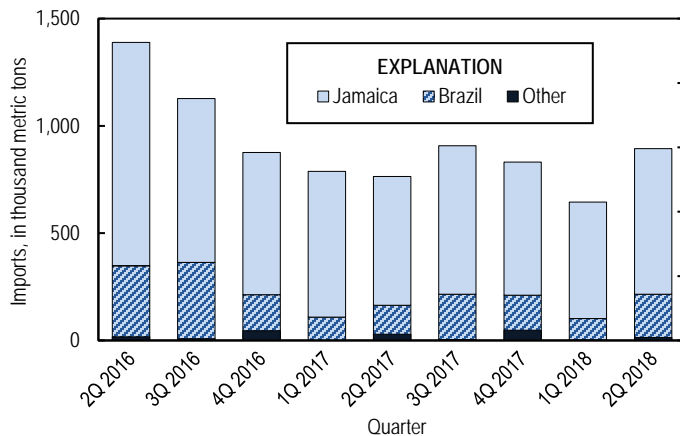


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the second quarter of 2016 through the second quarter of 2018. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the second quarter of 2018 were 353,000 t, 23% less than the revised total in the first quarter of 2018, 15% more than those in the second quarter of 2017, and 16% more than those in the second quarter of 2016 (fig. 2). Imports in the first quarter spiked as aluminum smelters restarting capacity stockpiled alumina ahead of production, and the decline in imports in the second quarter was attributed to the smelters slowing deliveries. (See Aluminum in January 2018 and Bauxite and Alumina in the First Quarter 2018.) The leading sources of imported alumina in the second quarter of 2018 were Brazil (41%), Australia (28%), and Jamaica (12%) (table 3).

Exports of alumina during the second quarter of 2018 were 104,000 t, 20% more than those in the first quarter of 2018, 31%

less than those in the second quarter of 2017, and 72% less than those in the second quarter of 2016 (fig. 2). The leading destinations for alumina exported in the second quarter of 2018 were the Netherlands (20%), Mexico (18%), and Norway (15%) (table 3).

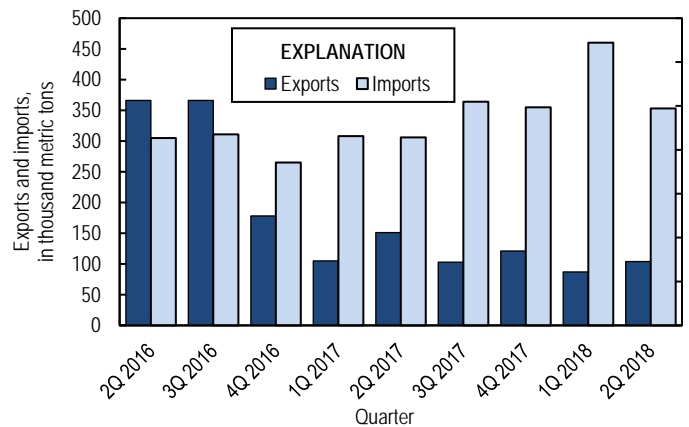


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the second quarter of 2016 through the second quarter of 2018. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

New Day Aluminum Holdings LLC, the parent company of Noranda Bauxite and Alumina LLC, announced that it would expand capacity at its alumina refinery in Gramercy, LA. A second chemical-grade alumina production line would be added to the 1.2-million-metric-ton-per-year (Mt/yr) refinery. The amount of additional capacity was not disclosed but a spokesperson said that chemical-grade alumina would account for more than 50% of the refinery's production once the project was completed. Installation of new red mud filtering technology would also be part of the modernization and expansion project and would significantly expand red mud storage capacity at the refinery. A completion schedule was not available, but financing for the projects was secured (Maltais, 2018).

On August 8, approximately 1,600 employees represented by the Australian Workers' Union at three alumina refineries and two bauxite mines in Western Australia, Australia, went on strike. The capacity of the Kwinana, Pinjarra, and Wagerup refineries were 2.2 Mt/yr, 4.2 Mt/yr, and 2.6 Mt/yr, respectively. The Huntly Mine capacity was 23 Mt/yr and the Willowdale Mine capacity was 10 Mt/yr. The mines and refineries were operated by Alcoa Corp. (60%) as part of its joint venture with Alumina Ltd. (40%). Production was reported to be continuing by about 1,900 employees not participating in the strike. On September 7, the striking workers voted against a contract proposed by the management (Alcoa Corp., 2018; Alumina Ltd., 2018; Lim, 2018).

United Company RUSAL announced that it would restart production from its 650,000-metric-ton-per-year (t/yr) alumina refinery at Friguia, Guinea. The refinery was shut down in 2012. Rusal planned to produce alumina at a rate of 550,000 to 600,000 t/yr once rampup was completed by midyear 2019. The adjacent 2.1-Mt/yr bauxite mine was also being restarted to supply the refinery. Rusal also started shipments of bauxite from the Dian-Dian Mine in Guinea. The capacity of the new mine was 3 Mt/yr (Blamey, 2018; Flaws, 2018).

References Cited

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

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2017	2018		
		1st quarter	2d quarter	1st quarter– 2d quarter
Imports for consumption:				
Brazil	699,000	102,000	215,000	317,000
Jamaica ²	2,590,000	543,000	679,000	1,220,000
Other	137,000	5,220	23,400	28,700
Total	3,430,000	651,000	917,000	1,570,000
Exports:				
Canada	2,560 ^r	553 ^r	1,090	1,640
Other	1,550	285	475	760
Total	4,110 ^r	838 ^r	1,560	2,400

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	2018							
	2017		1st quarter		2d quarter		1st quarter– 2d quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports for consumption:								
Australia	--	159,000	--	26,000	--	24,900	--	50,900
China	71,700	18,200	10,700	1,000	12,000	1,390	22,700	2,390
Guyana	55,300	145,000	16,300	36,200	28,200	38,300	44,500	74,500
India	--	547	420	281	242	472	662	753
Turkey	--	101,000	--	47,100	--	--	--	47,100
Other	--	28,100	--	228	--	21,400	--	21,700
Total	127,000	453,000	27,500	111,000	40,400	86,500	67,900	197,000
Exports:								
Canada	4,430	--	1,540	--	834	--	2,380	--
China	9,070	--	60	--	120	--	180	--
Mexico	464	--	460	--	58	--	518	--
Other	673 ^r	102	165 ^r	--	244	--	409	--
Total	14,600 ^r	102	2,230 ^r	--	1,260	--	3,490	--

^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 ALUMINA, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons, calcined equivalent)

Country or locality	2017	2018		1st quarter– 2d quarter
		1st quarter	2d quarter	
Imports for consumption:²				
Australia	393,000	49,900	97,200	147,000
Brazil	543,000	319,000	146,000	464,000
Jamaica ³	169,000	32,200 ^r	44,100	76,200
Other	229,000	58,800	66,100	125,000
Total	1,330,000	460,000^r	353,000	813,000
Exports:⁴				
Canada	35,500 ^r	9,290	8,670	18,000
China	16,700	21,900	2,070	24,000
Iceland	62,600	--	--	--
India	33,400	1,360	4,010	5,370
Mexico	48,100 ^r	15,600	18,600	34,200
Netherlands	95,100 ^r	15,400	20,700	36,200
Norway	213	18	15,800	15,800
Russia	90,000	95	221	316
United Arab Emirates	32,800	372	741	1,110
Other	66,400 ^r	22,700	33,100	55,800
Total	481,000	86,900	104,000	191,000

^rRevised. -- 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: 416,000 (revised) metric tons (t) in 2017; 120,000 t in the first quarter of 2018; 119,000 t in the second quarter of 2018.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 74,300 (revised) t in 2017; 24,500 t in the first quarter of 2018; 28,200 t in the second quarter of 2018.

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