



U.S. Department of the Interior • Bureau of Mines

MINERAL INDUSTRY SURVEYS

T S Ary, Director

Washington, DC 20241

For information call:

Deborah A. Kramer, Commodity specialist (202) 634-1083

Magnesium, Quarterly

MAGNESIUM IN THE THIRD QUARTER 1990

U.S. primary magnesium production in the third quarter of 1990 was 33,401 metric tons, an 11% decrease from that in the previous quarter and 14% lower than production in the third quarter of 1989, according to the Bureau of Mines, U.S. Department of the Interior. Producers' metal shipments in the third quarter of 1990 were 32,421 tons. Inventories increased to 22,878 tons.

Producers' quoted prices for magnesium held steady in the third quarter of 1990 at \$1.63 per pound for primary ingot and \$1.43 per pound for diecasting alloy.

Exports of magnesium through August were 10% lower than those in the corresponding period of 1989. Startup of the new Canadian plants in 1990 resulted in a sharp increase in U.S. imports of primary magnesium from Canada. Consequently, U.S. magnesium imports through August were 30% greater than the total for 1989.

Norsk Hydro A/S announced plans to enhance its Becancour, Quebec, plant by expanding its casting facilities to include production of magnesium alloy billet, in addition to primary magnesium billet. This expansion is planned for completion in 1992, and the plant's total capacity to produce both primary and alloy billets will be 30,000 tons annually. Norsk Hydro also planned to spend \$6 million to construct a magnesium recycling

plant to process the company's home scrap as well as scrap from customers. This plant also is scheduled to reach full operation by 1992.

Production at Magnesium Co. of Canada Ltd.'s (MagCan) 12,500-ton-per-year primary magnesium plant in Alberta reportedly reached a level of 2,500 tons per year by mid-October. Despite operational problems, MagCan expected that production at the plant would reach its rated capacity by early 1991.

Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corp. and Southern Magnesium Chemicals Ltd. of India reported that plants with a combined annual capacity of 1,200 tons began operating in April. Production from these plants was expected to be sufficient to supply the country's annual demand of 800 to 1,000 tons.

NOTE: The telephone number for the MINES-DATA computer bulletin board is (202) 634-4637 (2400,N,8,1). Data on magnesium and other metals are available on MINES-DATA up to 4 weeks sooner than through the mail. If you should need technical assistance or would like to receive a copy of the MINES-DATA instruction manual, please leave a message with the Bureau answering machine number (202) 634-9632.

Table 1.—U.S. imports for consumption and exports of magnesium

(Metric tons)

	1989 Final	1990				
		Jan.- May	June	July	Aug.	Jan.- Aug.
Imports:						
Metallic and scrap	7,652	5,126	1,390	2,581	3,321	12,418
Alloys (magnesium content)	3,830	1,499	722	497	177	2,895
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (magnesium content) ..	808	495	63	96	39	693
Total	12,290	7,120	2,175	3,174	3,537	16,006
Exports:						
Metallic and scrap	44,639	19,379	2,900	2,513	3,595	28,387
Alloys (gross weight)	3,850	1,885	733	200	344	3,162
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (gross weight)	8,145	1,966	258	232	394	2,850
Total	56,634	23,230	3,891	2,945	4,333	34,399

Source: Bureau of the Census.

Fig. 1 - U.S. primary magnesium production, shipments, and inventories

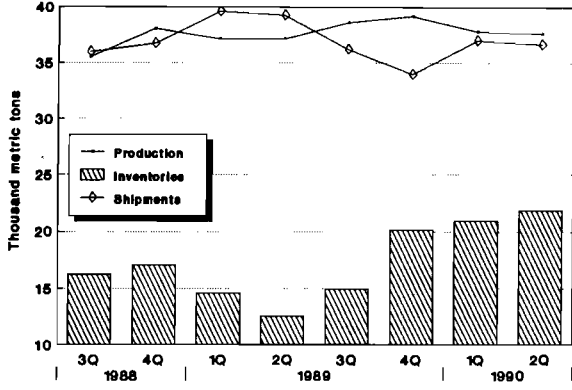


Fig. 2 - Magnesium exports 1989 and 1990 (Cumulative)

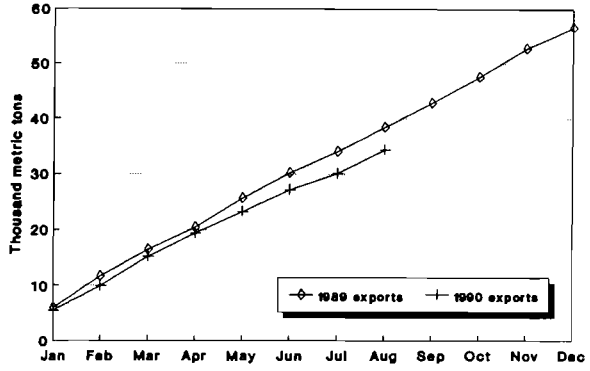


Fig. 3 - Magnesium imports 1989 and 1990 (Cumulative)

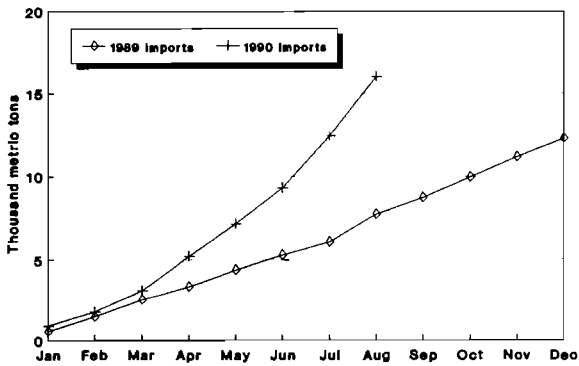


Fig. 4 - Magnesium import sources

