

Mineral Industry Surveys

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MAGNESIUM IN THE FOURTH QUARTER 2014

Total U.S. magnesium exports in 2014 were 6% more than exports in 2013. Mexico (37%), Canada (21%), Brazil (15%), and Singapore (15%) were the principal destinations for magnesium exports. Exports of crude metal and alloys increased by 4% and 8%, respectively, but exports of semifabricated magnesium materials decreased by 28%.

Total magnesium imports for consumption in 2014 were 13% more than imports in 2013. Israel was the source of 72% of imported magnesium metal, up from 69% in 2013. Russia (14%), Canada (7%), and Brazil (4%) were the other principal sources of magnesium metal imports during 2014. Scrap accounted for 37% of total magnesium imports, 40% of which came from Canada. Crude metal and alloys accounted for 31% and 30%, respectively, of all magnesium imports during 2014.

In 2014, China produced 874,000 metric tons (t) of magnesium, an increase of 13% compared with that in 2013. China exported 227,000 t of unwrought magnesium, 7.2% more than in 2013, and 435,000 t of total magnesium products, 5.8% more than in 2013. Consumption of magnesium in China was 401,000 t, 14% more than in 2013 (Leung, 2015; Shair, 2015; Yee, 2015a, b).

Update

The quoted U.S. magnesium import price ranges (table 2) decreased slightly during the fourth quarter of 2014. Magnesium

prices in China and Europe decreased by 6% and 5%, respectively.

Israel Chemicals Ltd. (ICL) announced that if a labor strike continued at the chlorine plant of a subsidiary, Dead Sea Works Ltd., magnesium production at Dead Sea Magnesium Ltd., another ICL subsidiary, would be affected. On February 18, 2015, workers at the chlorine plant went on strike in solidarity with workers at another ICL subsidiary, Dead Sea Bromine Co. Ltd., who went on strike about three weeks earlier in protest of ICL's plans to shut down the bromine plant (Sandler, 2015).

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References Cited

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Sandler, Neal, 2015, Dead Sea Works strike impacts Mg plant—Israel Chemicals: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 35, February 19, p. 4.
Shair, Wendy, 2015, China's 2014 primary magnesium output up 13%—CNIA: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 24, February 4, p. 4.
Yee, Alvin, 2015a, China December Mg, scrap exports up 14% to 43,934 mt: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 14, January 21, p. 3.
Yee, Alvin, 2015b, China's Dec unwrought Mg exports up 19% year on year: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 17, January 26, p. 10.

TABLE 1
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS OF MAGNESIUM¹

(Metric tons)

	2013	2014				
		January– September	October	November	December	January– December
Imports for consumption:						
Metal	15,200	12,600	1,020	1,210	1,420	16,200
Waste and scrap	17,500	14,700	1,690	1,360	1,280	19,000
Alloys (magnesium content)	12,400	11,500	1,770	844	1,520	15,600
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (magnesium content)	835	793	118	141	147	1,200
Total	45,900	39,500	4,600	3,550	4,360	52,000
Exports:						
Metal	5,790	4,950	439	289	339	6,010
Waste and scrap	471	870	32	21	--	923
Alloys (gross weight)	8,240	6,480	628	1,320	477	8,900
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (gross weight)	1,600	911	68	86	90	1,160
Total	16,100	13,200	1,170	1,710	905	17,000

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 2
MAGNESIUM PRICES, FOURTH QUARTER 2014

		Beginning of quarter	End of quarter
U.S. spot dealer import	dollars per pound	1.86–1.91	1.83–1.89
U.S. spot Western	do.	2.10–2.20	2.10–2.20
China	dollars per metric ton	2,450–2,480	2,300–2,350
European free market	do.	2,530–2,600	2,375–2,475
do. Ditto.			

Source: Platts Metals Week.