

Mineral Industry Surveys

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MAGNESIUM IN THE FOURTH QUARTER 2015

U.S. magnesium exports in 2015 were 11% less than exports in 2014. Canada (42%), Mexico (25%), and Singapore (17%) were the principal destinations. Exports of metal and waste and scrap decreased by 13% and 53%, respectively. Magnesium imports for consumption in 2015 were 5% less than imports in 2014 (table 1). Israel was the source of 72% of imported magnesium metal and Russia was the source of 14%. Scrap accounted for 43% of the total 2015 imports, 47% of which came from Canada, 21% came from the United Kingdom, and 17% came from Mexico (fig. 1).

Total production in China through November was 749,000 metric tons (t), 4% less than that in the same period in 2014. In November magnesium production in China was 75,700 t, slightly more than that in the prior month and in November 2014 (Lee, 2015).

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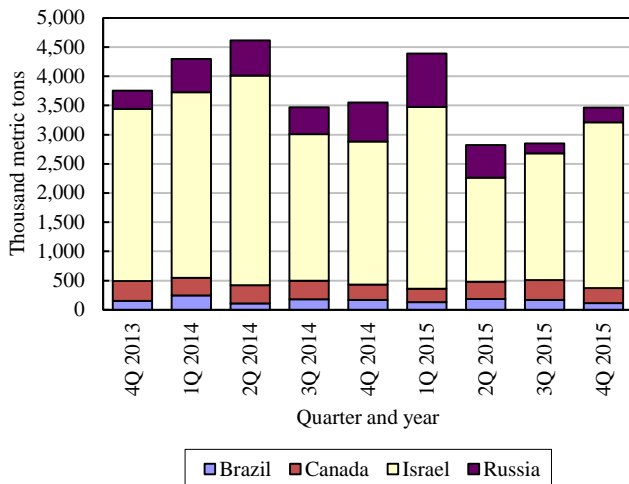


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of magnesium metal from the fourth quarter 2013 through the fourth quarter 2015. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Although the U.S. spot Western price range for magnesium was unchanged, U.S. spot dealer prices for imported magnesium decreased slightly during the fourth quarter of 2015. Magnesium prices in China and Europe (table 2) decreased by 11% and 8%, respectively, during the fourth quarter of 2015. Stagnant demand for magnesium in China and most other markets during the fourth quarter of 2015 was cited for the price declines during the quarter (Yee, 2015).

References Cited

- Lee, Winnie, 2015, China's Jan-Nov magnesium output falls 4% to 748,600 mt: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 252, December 23, p. 5-6.
- Yee, Alvin, 2015, China Mg export offers dip on prevailing weak buying interest: Platts Metals Daily, v. 4, no. 228, November 19, p. 6.

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

(Metric tons)

	2015					
	2014	January– September	October	November	December	January– December
Imports for consumption:						
Metal	16,200	10,300	1,090	1,440	984	13,800
Waste and scrap	19,000	14,900	2,140	2,200	2,060	21,300
Alloys (magnesium content)	15,600	9,800	1,470	919	902	13,100
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (magnesium content)	1,200	780	96	84	109	1,070
Total	52,000	35,800	4,800	4,650	4,060	49,300
Exports:						
Metal	6,010	3,980	448	302	497	5,220
Waste and scrap	923	205	111	--	116	432
Alloys (gross weight)	8,900	6,400	753	719	666	8,540
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (gross weight)	1,160	791	61	67	79	998
Total	17,000	11,400	1,370	1,090	1,360	15,200

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 2015

		Beginning of quarter	End of quarter
U.S. spot dealer import	dollars per pound	1.72–1.75	1.68–1.72
U.S. spot Western	do.	2.10–2.20	2.10–2.20
China	dollars per metric ton	2,020–2,060	1,800–1,850
European free market	do.	2,025–2,200	1,900–2,000
do. Ditto.			

Source: Platts Metals Week.