

Mineral Industry Surveys

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MAGNESIUM METAL IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2021

Total magnesium metal imports for consumption in the first quarter of 2021 were 14,400 metric tons (t), 9% less than imports in the fourth quarter of 2020, 34% less than those in the first quarter of 2020, but 3% more than those in the first quarter of 2019 (table 1).

Compared with those in the fourth quarter of 2020, imports of alloys, semifabricated products, and scrap decreased by 18%, 33%, and 4%, respectively, and imports of metal decreased slightly. In the first quarter of 2021, magnesium metal accounted for 31% of the imports, with Turkey (42%), Russia (35%), and Israel (12%) being the leading sources (fig. 1). Scrap accounted for 41% of the imports in the first quarter of 2021, with Canada (43%), Mexico (20%), and China (11%), as the leading sources. Alloys accounted for 23% of the imports, with Taiwan (24%), Germany (15%), the Republic of Korea (13%), and Czechia (11%) as the leading sources (table 1).

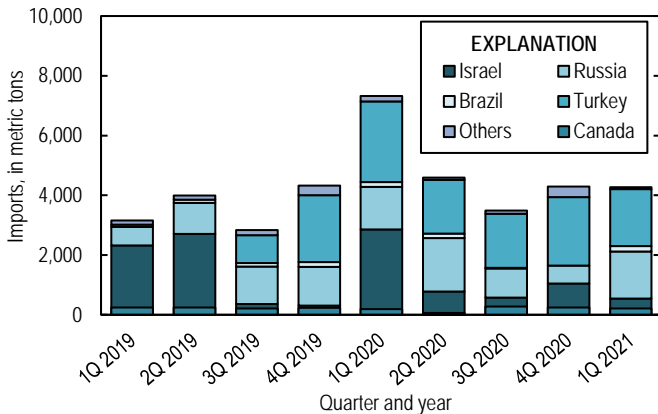


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of magnesium metal from the first quarter of 2019 through the first quarter of 2021. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Total magnesium metal exports in the first quarter of 2021 were 69% less than exports in the fourth quarter of 2020, 48% less than those in the first quarter of 2020, and 34% less than

those in the first quarter of 2019. Exports of metal, alloys, semifabricated products, and scrap decreased by 92%, 38%, 23%, and 46%, respectively, compared with exports in the fourth quarter of 2021 (table 1). Canada (64%), Israel (7%), Serbia (7%), Mexico (5%), and Czechia (3%) were the leading export destinations in the first quarter of 2021. Canada received 96% of metal, 94% of alloy, 16% of semifabricated product, and 49% of scrap exports. Israel received 32% of semifabricated product exports. Czechia and Serbia received 12% and 27%, respectively, of scrap exports.

The U.S. spot Western average price for magnesium was unchanged in the first quarter of 2021. The average U.S. spot dealer price for imported magnesium decreased slightly during the first quarter of 2021. In Europe, the average price was slightly more at the end of the quarter compared with that of the beginning of the quarter (table 2).

Update

Construction of a secondary magnesium smelter by Alliance Magnesium Inc. was nearing completion, with trial production scheduled for May. The 18,000-metric-ton-per-year secondary smelter located in Asbestos, Quebec, Canada, would start commercial production by the end of June (McBeth, 2021).

Reference Cited

McBeth, Karen, 2021, Magnesium recycler AMACOR compels Alliance response in trade secrets case: S&P Global Platts Metals Daily, v. 10, no. 79, April 23, p. 8-9.

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

(Metric tons)

	2020	2021			January– March
		January	February	March	
Imports for consumption:					
Metal	20,500 ^r	2,130	1,180	1,180	4,490
Waste and scrap	23,800	2,020	1,960	1,900	5,880
Alloys (magnesium content)	16,200 ^r	1,430	603	1,280	3,320
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (magnesium content)	3,390	232	254	199	684
Total	63,800 ^r	5,820	4,000	4,560	14,400
Exports:					
Metal	7,250	100	67	71	238
Waste and scrap	2,300	209	119	152	480
Alloys (gross weight)	2,940	209	177	228	613
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (gross weight)	2,370	95	89	207	390
Total	14,900	612	451	658	1,720

^rRevised.

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 2
MAGNESIUM PRICES, FIRST QUARTER 2021

		Beginning of quarter	End of quarter
U.S. spot dealer import	dollars per pound	2.00–2.15	2.00–2.10
U.S. spot Western	do.	2.30–2.35	2.30–2.35
European free market	dollar per metric ton	2,550–2,700	2,600–2,700
do. Ditto.			

Source: S&P Global Platts Metals Week.