

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN MARCH 2004

Natural soda ash production in March was 937,000 metric tons (t), 10% higher than the previous month's production, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Ending inventories were 264,000 t, 9% lower than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in March was 1.50 million tons. Total production of chemical caustic soda was withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

Apparent consumption of soda ash in February was 426,000 t, 18% lower than the February 2003 level of 521,000 t. Exports

and imports of soda ash in February 2004 were 467,000 t and 470 t, respectively.

The trends in cumulative soda ash statistics through February 2004, compared with those of February 2003, were as follows: production was slightly higher, imports slightly lower, exports 9% higher, ending stocks 16% higher, and apparent consumption 3% higher.

The 2003 quarterly end-use data are included in table 6 of this report.

TABLE 1
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production ²	Ending stocks	
2003:			
February	820	251	1,240
March	897	263	1,410
April	872	234	1,320
May	926	298	1,340
June	878	255	1,110
July	923	297	1,110
August	888	323	1,110
September	869	286	1,300
October	913	291	1,390
November	860	309	1,250
December	925	330	1,450
Total (January-March)	2,580	XX	4,120
Year total	10,600	XX	15,500
2004:			
January	857	331	1,310
February	852	291	1,330
March	937	264	1,500
Total	2,650	XX	4,150

XX Not applicable.

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

²Production data includes soda ash equivalent from soda liquors only. Soda ash equivalent from mine water is not included. Soda liquors are withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

TABLE 2
U.S. EXPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY, IN FEBRUARY 2004^{1,2}

Country	Quantity (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)	Unit value
Japan	56,900	\$5,430	\$95
Mexico	46,800	5,450	117
Taiwan	45,800	4,060	89
China	31,400	1,940	62
Chile	30,700	3,930	128
Canada	28,800	2,210	77
Brazil	28,200	3,010	107
France	21,000	2,150	102
Saudi Arabia	20,000	1,690	84
Argentina	19,600	2,890	148
Other	137,000	15,400	112
Total or average	467,000	48,200	103

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

²March 2004 data were not available at time of publication.

³Free alongside ship value at U.S. ports.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. EXPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY, IN 2004^{1,2}

(Metric tons)

Country	January	February	Total	% of total
Argentina	20,500	19,600	40,100	5
Australia	--	15,500	15,500	2
Belgium	21,200	10,000	31,200	4
Brazil	15,000	28,200	43,200	5
Canada	28,100	28,800	56,900	7
Chile	409	30,700	31,100	4
China	23,000	31,400	54,400	7
Colombia	9,340	11,000	20,300	3
Costa Rica	--	2,000	2,000	(3)
Ecuador	5,310	--	5,310	1
France	6,940	21,000	27,900	4
Germany	347	--	347	(3)
Guatemala	--	5	5	(3)
Indonesia	42,300	--	42,300	5
Ireland	--	40	40	(3)
Italy	31	--	31	(3)
Japan	37,900	56,900	94,800	12
Korea, Republic of	18,100	16,900	35,000	4
Malaysia	--	8,000	8,000	1
Mexico	36,800	46,800	83,600	11
Netherlands	6,020	9,470	15,500	2
New Zealand	6,600	5,000	11,600	1
Peru	1,580	3,900	5,480	1
Philippines	7,500	--	7,500	1
Russia	3	--	3	(3)
Saudi Arabia	--	20,000	20,000	3
South Africa	6,500	--	6,500	1
Spain	49	14,700	14,800	2
Taiwan	11,000	45,800	56,800	7
Thailand	19,000	16,200	35,200	4
United Arab Emirates	--	8,000	8,000	1
Venezuela	366	16,700	17,000	2
Total	324,000	467,000	790,000	100

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

²March 2004 data were not available at time of publication.

³Less than 1/2 unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH^{1,2}

Period	Quantity (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)
2003:		
February	375	\$133
March	540	165
April	784	145
May	662	165
June	138	78
July	380	134
August	263	78
September	266	104
October	331	103
November	435	126
December	543	144
Total (January-February)	990	268
Year total	5,330	1,510
2004:		
January	511	155
February	470	123
Total	981	278

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

²March 2004 data were not available at time of publication.

³Cost, insurance, and freight value at U.S. ports.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
U.S. APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH¹

(Metric tons)

Period	Production	Imports	Exports	Net stock		Apparent consumption ²
				Increase	Decrease	
2003:						
February	820,000	375	327,000	--	27,200	521,000
March	897,000	540	375,000	11,500	--	510,000
April	872,000	784	350,000	--	28,300	551,000
May	926,000	662	340,000	63,900	--	523,000
June	878,000	138	374,000	--	43,300	547,000
July	923,000	380	356,000	41,700	--	526,000
August	888,000	263	422,000	26,000	--	440,000
September	869,000	266	385,000	--	36,800	522,000
October	913,000	331	295,000	4,910	--	613,000
November	860,000	435	404,000	18,000	--	439,000
December	925,000	543	426,000	21,300	--	478,000
Total (January-February)	1,690,000	990	724,000	29,500	--	935,000
Year total	10,600,000	5,330	4,450,000	108,000	--	6,090,000
2004:						
January	857,000	511	324,000	660	--	533,000
February	852,000	470	467,000	--	40,200	426,000
March	937,000	NA	NA	--	26,900	NA
January-February	1,710,000	981	790,000	--	39,500	959,000

NA Not available. -- Zero.

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

²Production plus imports minus exports plus or minus stock changes.

TABLE 6
REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH IN THE UNITED STATES, BY END USE, BY QUARTERS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

SIC code	End use	2002	2003				Total
			First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	
32	Glass:						
3221	Container	1,560	391	410	398	378	1,580
3211	Flat	1,100	262	265	275	261	1,060
3296	Fiber	273	66.6	64.2	66.6	71.3	269
3229	Other	231	52.8	49.3	44.5	49.3	196
	Total	3,170	773	789	784	759	3,100
281	Chemicals	1,670	425	446	428	427	1,730
284	Soaps and detergents	733	180	153	175	166	674
26	Pulp and paper	104	27.5	29.9	30.2	26.3	114
2899	Water treatment ²	87.7	17.0	20.6	17.2	15.6	70.4
	Flue gas desulfurization	123	31.7	30.6	33.0	28.5	124
	Distributors	315	69.6	67.6	70.9	68.7	277
	Other	225	52.5	40.0	40.3	47.3	180
	Total domestic consumption ³	6,430	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,540	6,270
	Exports ⁴	3,760	1,050	1,100	1,040	1,130	4,320
	Canada	368	90.1	81.4	73.5	74.3	319
	Total industry sales ⁵	10,200	2,620	2,680	2,620	2,670	10,600
	Total sales from plants	10,600	2,620	2,710	2,650	2,680	10,700
	Total production	10,500	2,580	2,680	2,680	2,700	10,600

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

²Includes soda ash equivalent from soda liquors and purge liquors sold to powerplant for water treatment. Sales of mine water are excluded.

³Imports reported by the producer/importer have been distributed into appropriate end-use categories listed above.

⁴As reported by producers. Includes Canada. Data may not necessarily agree with that reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for the same periods.

⁵Represents soda ash from domestic origin (production and inventory changes) and imports and for exports. Includes soda ash sold by coproducers and distributed by purchasers into appropriate end-use categories.