

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN APRIL 2006

Natural soda ash production in April was estimated to be 889,000 metric tons (t), 7% lower than the previous month's production of 952,000 t, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Ending inventories were estimated to be 256,000 t, 1% higher than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in April was 1.29 million tons. Total production of chemical caustic soda was withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

Apparent consumption of soda ash in March was estimated to be 530,000 t, 6% lower than the March 2005 level of 561,000 t.

Exports and imports of soda ash in March 2006 were 367,000 t and 619 t, respectively.

The trends in cumulative soda ash statistics through March 2006, compared with those of March 2005, were as follows: production was slightly higher, imports 40% lower, exports unchanged, ending stocks 11% lower, and apparent consumption 3% lower.

TABLE 1
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

| Period | Soda ash | | Wyoming trona production |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Production ² | Ending stocks | |
| 2005: | | | |
| March | 894 | 285 | 1,410 |
| April | 928 | 275 | 1,360 |
| May | 931 | 259 | 1,510 |
| June | 932 | 266 | 1,550 |
| July | 955 | 297 | 1,550 |
| August | 893 | 246 | 1,380 |
| September | 923 | 296 | 1,480 |
| October | 898 | 307 | 1,320 |
| November | 895 | 292 | 1,310 |
| December | 922 | 243 | 1,360 |
| Total (January-April) | 3,610 | XX | 5,560 |
| Year total | 11,000 | XX | 17,000 |
| 2006: | | | |
| January | 946 | 181 | 1,190 |
| February | 801 | 198 | 1,270 |
| March | 952 | 253 ^e | 1,460 |
| April | 889 ^e | 256 ^e | 1,290 |
| Total | 3,590 | XX | 5,210 |

^eEstimated. XX Not applicable.

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

²Production data include 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 MARCH 2006^{1, 2}

| Country | Quantity (metric tons) | Value ³ (thousands) | Unit value |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Mexico | 52,100 | \$7,010 | \$135 |
| Venezuela | 38,000 | 6,540 | 172 |
| Canada | 35,200 | 4,690 | 133 |
| Spain | 30,300 | 4,290 | 141 |
| Indonesia | 30,100 | 4,500 | 150 |
| Thailand | 27,100 | 4,190 | 154 |
| Brazil | 24,900 | 4,050 | 163 |
| Taiwan | 20,500 | 3,230 | 157 |
| Korea, Republic of | 19,300 | 2,940 | 152 |
| South Africa | 16,000 | 2,940 | 183 |
| Other | 73,400 | 11,300 | 154 |
| Total or average | 367,000 | 55,600 | 152 |

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

²April 2006 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 2006^{1,2}

(Metric tons)

| Country | January | February | March | Total | % of total |
|----------------------|---------|----------|---------|-----------|------------|
| Australia | 2,450 | 7,010 | -- | 9,460 | 1 |
| Bahrain | -- | -- | 204 | 204 | (3) |
| Belgium | 38,300 | 12,200 | 498 | 51,100 | 5 |
| Brazil | 51,900 | 15,700 | 24,900 | 92,500 | 8 |
| Cameroon | -- | -- | 59 | 59 | (3) |
| Canada | 35,000 | 27,600 | 35,200 | 97,700 | 9 |
| Chile | 31,800 | 35,100 | -- | 66,900 | 6 |
| Colombia | 15,600 | -- | 13,900 | 29,600 | 3 |
| Dominican Republic | -- | -- | 6,050 | 6,050 | 1 |
| Ecuador | -- | -- | 8,000 | 8,000 | 1 |
| El Salvador | -- | -- | 10,000 | 10,000 | 1 |
| France | 22 | -- | 58 | 80 | (3) |
| Germany | -- | -- | 44 | 44 | (3) |
| Grenada | -- | -- | 5 | 5 | (3) |
| Guatemala | 5,950 | -- | -- | 5,950 | 1 |
| Indonesia | 40,200 | -- | 30,100 | 70,300 | 6 |
| Japan | 4,400 | 49,000 | 12,300 | 65,700 | 6 |
| Korea, Republic of | -- | 25,300 | 19,300 | 44,600 | 4 |
| Malaysia | -- | -- | 12,000 | 12,000 | 1 |
| Mexico | 54,600 | 72,700 | 52,100 | 179,000 | 16 |
| Netherlands | 15,100 | 42 | 39 | 15,100 | 1 |
| New Zealand | 15,000 | -- | -- | 15,000 | 1 |
| Panama | 2,000 | -- | -- | 2,000 | (3) |
| Peru | -- | 10,700 | -- | 10,700 | 1 |
| Philippines | -- | -- | 10,200 | 10,200 | 1 |
| Portugal | 10,500 | 5,000 | -- | 15,500 | 1 |
| Russia | 600 | -- | -- | 600 | (3) |
| Saudi Arabia | 37,400 | 21,000 | -- | 58,400 | 5 |
| South Africa | 6,640 | 13,300 | 16,000 | 35,900 | 3 |
| Spain | 35 | 33 | 30,300 | 30,400 | 3 |
| Sweden | -- | 1 | -- | 1 | (3) |
| Taiwan | 22,300 | 15,100 | 20,500 | 57,900 | 5 |
| Thailand | 21,100 | -- | 27,100 | 48,200 | 4 |
| United Arab Emirates | 17,000 | 6,000 | -- | 23,000 | 2 |
| Venezuela | 17,300 | 6,880 | 38,000 | 62,200 | 5 |
| Total | 445,000 | 322,000 | 367,000 | 1,130,000 | 100 |

-- Zero.

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

²April 2006 data were not available at time of publication.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

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

| Period | Quantity (metric tons) | Value ³ (thousands) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2005: | | |
| March | 1,470 | \$351 |
| April | 511 | 186 |
| May | 745 | 158 |
| June | 668 | 183 |
| July | 602 | 208 |
| August | 685 | 227 |
| September | 270 | 116 |
| October | 441 | 172 |
| November | 768 | 238 |
| December | 596 | 243 |
| Total (January-March) | 2,920 | 729 |
| Year total | 8,210 | 2,460 |
| 2006: | | |
| January | 673 | 221 |
| February | 456 | 179 |
| March | 619 | 199 |
| Total | 1,750 | 599 |

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

²April 2006 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 | |
| 2005: | | | | | | |
| March | 894,000 | 1,470 | 409,000 | -- | 74,600 | 561,000 |
| April | 928,000 | 511 | 485,000 | -- | 10,500 | 454,000 |
| May | 931,000 | 745 | 387,000 | -- | 15,400 | 559,000 |
| June | 932,000 | 668 | 377,000 | 40,000 | -- | 516,000 |
| July | 955,000 | 602 | 368,000 | -- | 2,790 | 591,000 |
| August | 893,000 | 685 | 432,000 | -- | 50,500 | 513,000 |
| September | 923,000 | 270 | 328,000 | 49,600 | -- | 545,000 |
| October | 898,000 | 441 | 356,000 | 11,300 | -- | 530,000 |
| November | 895,000 | 768 | 408,000 | -- | 14,800 | 503,000 |
| December | 922,000 | 596 | 409,000 | -- | 49,600 | 563,000 |
| Total (January-March) | 2,680,000 | 2,920 | 1,130,000 | -- | 52,400 | 1,610,000 |
| Total | 11,000,000 | 8,210 | 4,680,000 | -- | 95,000 | 6,380,000 |
| 2006: | | | | | | |
| January | 946,000 | 673 | 445,000 | -- | 61,800 | 563,000 |
| February | 801,000 | 456 | 322,000 | 16,600 | -- | 463,000 |
| March | 952,000 | 619 | 367,000 | 55,200 ^e | -- | 530,000 ^e |
| April | 889,000 ^e | NA | NA | 3,720 ^e | -- | NA |
| January-March | 2,700,000 | 1,750 | 1,130,000 | 10,000 | -- | 1,560,000 |

^eEstimated. 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.