

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN MAY 2009

U.S. natural soda ash production in May was 780,000 metric tons (t), 17% higher than the previous month's production of 664,000 t, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Ending inventories for May 2009 were 271,000 t, 13% higher than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in May was 1,180,000 t. Total production of chemical caustic soda was withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

Apparent consumption of soda ash in April 2009 was 411,000 t, 16% lower than that of April 2008, and ending stocks were 46% higher.

Exports and imports of soda ash in April 2009 were 295,000 t and 513 t, respectively.

The trends in soda ash statistics for April 2009, compared with those of April 2008, were as follows: production was 25% lower; imports were 43% lower; exports were 31% lower; and apparent consumption, 16% lower. Global economic problems have reduced world soda ash consumption, which in turn has reduced U.S. soda ash exports. To avoid an oversupply of soda ash inventories, domestic soda ash production has been cut back intentionally.

All percentages in this report were computed using unrounded data.

TABLE 1
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production ²	Ending stocks	
2008:			
January-May	4,630	XX	7,410
April	890	164	1,530
May	987	210	1,490
June	935	211	1,480
July	912	169	1,200
August	976	222	1,630
September	935	265	1,490
October	996	247	1,560
November	965	262	1,530
December	917	259	1,510
January-December	11,300	XX	17,800
2009:			
January	806	258	1,160
February	670	273	2,020
March	732	280	983
April	664	239	1,080
May	780	271	1,180
January-May	3,650	XX	6,420

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 2009^{1, 2}

Country	January	February	March	April			Year to date		
				Quantity (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Unit Value	Quantity (metric tons)	% of total	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Argentina	--	17,800	--	--	--	--	17,800	1	\$4,720
Australia	7,000	7,000	10,600	--	--	--	24,600	2	5,890
Belgium	47,600	32,400	9,200	23,000	\$3,150	\$137	112,000	8	19,400
Brazil	50,200	28,200	35,000	41,200	10,700	261	155,000	12	32,700
Cameroon	--	--	60	--	--	--	60	(4)	20
Canada	21,800	21,100	25,800	17,700	3,690	209	86,400	6	17,100
Chile	19,800	10,000	14,300	15,800	3,220	204	59,900	4	12,700
Colombia	19,500	6,770	8,100	--	--	--	34,400	3	7,320
Costa Rica	4,500	4,920	--	--	--	--	9,420	1	2,500
Dominican Republic	1,980	2,000	--	--	--	--	3,980	(4)	1,160
Ecuador	--	5,770	--	--	--	--	5,770	(4)	1,710
France	15,000	--	--	14,900	2,450	165	29,900	2	4,930
Germany	--	--	39	--	--	--	39	(4)	21
Guatemala	--	--	2,500	--	--	--	2,500	(4)	728
Indonesia	9,600	--	20,500	--	--	--	30,100	2	5,810
Japan	6,000	20,500	19,500	--	--	--	46,000	3	5,720
Korea, Republic of	16,000	13,100	100	20,100	4,030	201	49,300	4	10,200
Malaysia	--	--	4,000	--	--	--	4,000	(4)	957
Mexico	57,000	56,300	67,000	63,000	13,900	221	243,000	18	52,400
Netherlands	23,800	11,100	20,200	17,500	2,820	161	72,600	5	13,900
New Zealand	--	7,000	6,000	--	--	--	13,000	1	2,870
Panama	2,110	--	--	2,540	713	281	4,650	(4)	1,350
Peru	8,550	--	--	4,500	1,140	252	13,100	1	3,000
Philippines	5,000	--	14,100	--	--	--	19,100	1	2,950
Portugal	13,500	6,000	--	11,000	1,160	105	30,500	2	3,990
Saudi Arabia	17,500	--	13,700	15,000	2,920	194	46,200	3	9,750
Singapore	--	185	--	--	--	--	185	(4)	20
South Africa	22,500	6,460	--	--	--	--	28,900	2	6,480
Spain	28,200	--	28,700	5,500	696	127	62,500	5	10,300
Taiwan	14,500	--	12,500	8,550	1,530	179	35,600	3	5,220
Thailand	--	17,500	--	--	--	--	17,500	1	3,580
Turkey	--	25	--	--	--	--	25	(4)	17
United Arab Emirates	7,520	--	11,500	3,500	662	189	22,600	2	5,600
Venezuela	4,000	12,400	6,000	30,900	7,930	256	53,300	4	13,500
Other	--	--	14	--	--	--	14	(4)	15
Total	423,000	287,000	329,000	295,000	60,800	206	1,330,000	100	269,000

-- Zero.

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

²May 2009 data were not available at time of publication.

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

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH^{1, 2}

Period	Quantity (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)
2008:		
January-April	4,750	\$955
April	895	204
May	906	308
June	1,130	360
July	632	214
August	1,070	407
September	658	282
October	1,410	530
November	615	211
December	1,730	553
January-December	12,900	3,820
2009:		
January	169	108
February	495	241
March	666	238
April	513	214
January-April	1,840	801

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

²May 2009 data were not available at time of publication.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH¹

(Metric tons)

Period	Production	Imports	Exports	Net stock		Apparent consumption ²
				Increase	Decrease	
2008:						
January-April	3,650,000	4,750	1,760,000	--	42,100	1,930,000
April	890,000	895	430,000	--	30,300	492,000
May	987,000	906	383,000	45,600	--	559,000
June	935,000	1,130	531,000	1,550	--	405,000
July	912,000	632	417,000	--	41,900	538,000
August	976,000	1,070	414,000	52,600	--	511,000
September	935,000	658	417,000	43,200	--	475,000
October	996,000	1,410	468,000	--	18,000	547,000
November	965,000	615	525,000	15,000	--	426,000
December	917,000	1,730	455,000	--	2,750	466,000
January-December	11,300,000	12,900	5,370,000	53,200	--	5,860,000
2009:						
January	806,000	169	423,000	--	1,160	384,000
February	670,000	495	287,000	14,900	--	369,000
March	732,000	666	329,000	6,750	--	397,000
April	664,000	513	295,000	--	40,400	411,000
May	780,000	NA	NA	31,700	--	NA
January-April	2,870,000	1,840	1,330,000	--	19,900	1,560,000

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.