

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## SODA ASH IN MAY 2017

U.S. natural soda ash production in May was 993,000 metric tons (t), 5% more than the previous month's production and slightly more than that of May 2016 (table 1). Ending inventories for May 2017 were 291,000 t, 3% less than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in May 2017 was 1.53 million metric tons (Mt), 8% more than that of April 2017 and May 2016.

Exports of soda ash in April 2017 were 610,000 t, slightly more than those of March 2017 and 14% more than those of April 2016 (table 4). Imports of soda ash in April 2017 were 2,450 t, 39% more than those of March 2017 and 35% less than those of April 2016. Soda ash import tonnages can differ widely from month to month, but generally are much smaller than soda ash export tonnages.

Apparent consumption for April 2017 was 296,000 t, a decrease of 36% compared with that of March 2017 and 32% less than that of April 2016. For the first four months of 2017, apparent consumption was about 10% less than for the same period in 2016.

Table 5 provides reported consumption statistics for the first quarter of 2017. During the first quarter, 577,000 t (48%) went to glassmaking and 341,000 t (28%) was consumed for chemicals. Total consumption for the first quarter of 2017 was 5% less than that of the first quarter of 2016. Comparing the two quarters shows a 7% decrease in consumption for the overall glass segment with decreases in every glass category. Consumption decreased in every category except flue gas desulfurization, other miscellaneous uses, and sales to distributors.

All percentages in this report were calculated using unrounded data.

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TABLE 1  
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production <sup>2</sup>	Stocks, end of period	
2016:			
January–May	4,820	280	7,150
May	987	280	1,420
June	989	306	1,380
July	1,060	357	1,470
August	984	314	1,460
September	961	342	1,560
October	995	405	1,560
November	990	365	1,550
December	1,010	336	1,620
January–December	11,800	336	17,700
2017:			
January	929	265	1,560
February	897	293	1,340
March	1,030	257	1,610
April	947	301	1,420
May	993	291	1,530
January–May	4,800	291	7,460

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

<sup>2</sup>Production 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 2017<sup>1,2</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country	January	February	March	Quantity	April	Unit value	January–April		
					Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)		Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)
Argentina	6,000	27,300	25,900	40	\$17	\$413	59,200	3	\$12,100
Australia	7,110	29,000	33,600	32,000	6,680	209	102,000	4	20,600
Belgium	1,260	14,900	10,100	14,400	3,160	219	40,700	2	10,000
Brazil	38,300	47,900	132,000	59,400	11,300	189	277,000	12	53,800
Canada	17,200	18,200	23,900	17,400	3,340	192	76,700	3	14,900
Chile	38,400	21,000	10,700	62,500	13,200	212	133,000	6	27,900
China	62	66,600	35,000	--	--	--	102,000	4	17,200
Colombia	9,000	14,000	8,000	16,500	3,230	196	47,500	2	8,930
Costa Rica	--	4,000	26	3,000	672	224	7,030	(4)	1,550
Ecuador	--	--	3,500	5,000	1,010	203	8,500	(4)	1,790
El Salvador	--	3,000	--	2,830	580	205	5,830	(4)	1,160
Guatemala	--	6,500	--	12,000	2,580	215	18,500	1	4,000
India	--	--	--	33,000	4,950	150	33,000	1	4,950
Indonesia	71,200	28,300	72,600	29,200	5,410	185	201,000	9	38,900
Japan	22,600	17,000	4,000	45,300	7,490	165	88,900	4	14,600
Korea, South	26,400	23,100	18,000	17,800	3,020	170	85,300	4	14,700
Malaysia	34,500	15,000	7,000	35,100	5,890	168	91,600	4	16,600
Mexico	82,400	83,300	114,000	79,400	18,400	232	359,000	16	82,700
Netherlands	22,800	--	8,050	--	--	--	30,800	1	6,190
New Zealand	--	6,000	--	--	--	--	6,000	(4)	1,120
Nigeria	5,900	--	7,970	--	--	--	13,900	1	3,530
Peru	6,580	--	75	19,100	3,960	208	25,700	1	4,950
Philippines	8,500	--	8,000	--	--	--	16,500	1	3,080
Saudi Arabia	16,000	--	--	--	--	--	16,000	1	2,760
South Africa	7,490	--	5,320	12,200	2,070	169	25,000	1	4,230
Spain	25,800	28,600	136	20,100	4,610	229	74,600	3	16,500
Taiwan	11,400	20,500	15,500	17,700	3,330	188	65,100	3	11,100
Thailand	38,000	25,900	21,300	33,100	5,480	166	118,000	5	21,300
Trinidad and Tobago	2,500	--	--	2,400	409	171	4,900	(4)	842
Tunisia	9,900	--	--	--	--	--	9,900	(4)	2,030
United Arab Emirates	9,000	--	--	--	--	--	9,000	(4)	1,480
United Kingdom	31,400	10,000	--	15,100	2,710	180	56,500	2	11,000
Venezuela	5,000	--	8,400	12,500	3,050	243	25,900	1	6,130
Vietnam	27,500	--	31,500	12,000	1,800	150	71,000	3	13,600
Other	34 <sup>r</sup>	2	189 <sup>r</sup>	460	88	192	685	(4)	155
Total	582,000	510,000	604,000	610,000	118,000	194	2,310,000	100	456,000

<sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>May 2017 data were not available at time of publication.

<sup>3</sup>Free alongside ship values at U.S. ports.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3  
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY, IN 2017<sup>1,2</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country	January	February	March	Quantity	April		Quantity	January–April	
					Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Unit value		Percent of total quantity	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)
China	236	403	195	68	\$48	\$714	901	11	\$255
France	236	40	20	20	11	530	316	4	72
Germany	251	303	1	549	88	160	1,110	14	183
Italy	--	17	--	836	92	111	853	11	102
Japan	1	--	--	120	16	137	121	2	29
Korea, South	206	514	617	411	49	120	1,750	22	210
Mexico	232	58	369	136	57	421	795	10	321
Poland	106	160	58	--	--	--	323	4	109
Turkey	106	--	--	106	13	121	213	3	26
United Kingdom	359	472	490	198	61	310	1,520	19	354
Other	1 <sup>r</sup>	1 <sup>r</sup>	7	3	11	3,350	12	(4)	30
Total	1,730	1,970	1,760	2,450	447	183	7,910	100	1,690

<sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>May 2017 data were not available at time of publication.

<sup>3</sup>Cost, insurance, and freight values at U.S. ports.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4  
U.S. APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons)

Period	Production	Exports	Imports	Net stock		Apparent consumption <sup>2</sup>
				Increase	Decrease	
2016:						
January–December	11,800,000	6,780,000	35,300	50,900	--	5,010,000
January–April	3,830,000	2,100,000	13,600	29,700 <sup>r</sup>	--	1,710,000 <sup>r</sup>
April	955,000	537,000	3,740	--	13,900	436,000
May	987,000	699,000	4,270	--	21,100	314,000
June	989,000	528,000	3,090	25,800	--	439,000
July	1,060,000	531,000	4,420	51,300	--	484,000
August	984,000	668,000	4,450	--	42,700	363,000
September	961,000	453,000	2,580	28,100	--	482,000
October	995,000	560,000	1,120	62,200	--	373,000
November	990,000	547,000	876	--	39,800	484,000
December	1,010,000	693,000	952	--	28,800	349,000
2017:						
January–April	3,800,000	2,310,000	7,910	--	34,800	1,540,000
January	929,000	582,000	1,730	--	70,800	419,000
February	897,000	510,000	1,970	27,700	--	361,000
March	1,030,000	604,000	1,760	--	35,700	464,000
April	947,000	610,000	2,450	44,000	--	296,000
May	993,000	NA	NA	--	10,600	NA

<sup>r</sup>Revised. NA Not available. -- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Production plus imports minus exports plus or minus stock changes.

TABLE 5  
REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH IN THE UNITED STATES, BY END USE, BY QUARTER<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

NAICS <sup>2</sup> code	End use	2016					2017
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter	1st quarter
3272	Glass:						
327213	Container	300	312	306	284	1,200	275
327211	Flat	249	265	252	254	1,020	241
327993	Fiber	41	41	40	40	161	35
327212	Other	32	33	31	30	126	26
	Total	622	650	629	608	2,510	577
32518	Chemicals	361	361	374	387	1,480	341
325611	Soaps and detergents	79	80	78	85	322	73
322	Pulp and paper	13	12	10	9	44	10
221310	Water treatment <sup>3</sup>	18	20	21	15	75	14
56221	Flue gas desulfurization	48	49	59	53	209	53
4246	Distributors	76	68	71	70	285	78
	Other	43	42	55	54	193	57
	Total domestic consumption <sup>4</sup>	1,260	1,280	1,300	1,280	5,120	1,200
	Exports <sup>5</sup>	1,580	1,690	1,640	1,710	6,610	1,380
	Canada	54	49	49	49	202	53
	Total industry sales <sup>6</sup>	2,840	2,970	2,930	2,990	11,700	2,580
	Total sales from plants	2,850	2,980	2,980	2,960	11,800	2,920
	Total production	2,870	2,930	3,010	3,000	11,800	2,860

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

<sup>2</sup>North American Industry Classification System.

<sup>3</sup>Includes soda ash equivalent from soda liquors and purge liquors sold to power plants for water treatment. Sales of mine water are excluded.

<sup>4</sup>Imports reported by the producer/importer have been distributed into appropriate end-use categories listed above.

<sup>5</sup>As reported by producers; includes Canada. Data may not necessarily agree with those reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for the same periods.

<sup>6</sup>Represents soda ash from domestic origin (production and inventory changes) and imports and exports. Includes soda ash sold by coproducers and distributed by purchasers into appropriate end-use categories.