

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## SODA ASH IN FEBRUARY 2018

U.S. natural soda ash production in February was 945,000 metric tons (t), 5% less than the previous month's production but 5% more than that of February 2017 (table 1). Ending stocks were 306,000 t, slightly less than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in February 2018 was 1.49 million metric tons (Mt), 9% less than that of January 2018 but 11% more than that of February 2017.

Exports of soda ash in January 2018 were 559,000 t, 9% less than those of December 2017 and 4% less than those of January 2016 (table 4). January 2018 imports of soda ash were 776 t, 61% more than those of December 2017 but 55% less than those of January 2016. Soda ash import tonnages can differ significantly from month to month, but generally are much smaller than soda ash export tonnages.

Apparent consumption for January 2018 was 421,000 t, a decrease of 6% compared with that of December 2017 and slightly more than that of January 2017. Apparent consumption can change significantly from month to month mostly owing to changes in the quantity of exports but usually stabilizes over the course of the year. In 2017, U.S. apparent consumption was 5.04 Mt, slightly more than that of 2016.

Table 5 provides reported consumption statistics for the fourth quarter of 2017. During the fourth quarter, 592,000 t

(48%) went to glassmaking and 352,000 t (28%) was consumed for chemicals. Total consumption for the fourth quarter of 2017 was 3% less than that of the fourth quarter of 2016. Comparing the two quarters shows a 3% decrease in consumption for the overall glass segment with decreases in every glass category except flat glass. Consumption decreased in every category except other miscellaneous uses. For the full year of 2017, total reported consumption was 4.91 Mt, 4% less than that of 2016.

All percentages in this report were calculated using unrounded data.

Note: The annual average value of U.S. soda ash production for 2017 was \$132.68 per short ton, a slight decrease compared to the 2016 average value of \$135.92 per short ton.

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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	
2017:			
January–February	1,830	293	2,900
February	897	293	1,340
March	1,030	257	1,610
April	947	301	1,420
May	993	291	1,530
June	1,020	306	1,410
July	1,020	237	1,530
August	997	244	1,510
September	989	251	1,490
October	1,040	237	1,510
November	1,000	259	1,400
December	1,100	293	1,710
January–December	12,000	293	18,000
2018:			
January	992	307	1,630
February	945	306	1,490
January–February	1,940	306	3,110

<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 OR LOCALITY, IN 2018<sup>1,2</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	Quantity	January		Percent of total quantity
		Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Unit value	
Australia	40,000	\$8,200	\$205	7
Belgium	213	23	110	(4)
Brazil	102,000	20,500	201	18
Canada	18,100	3,630	201	3
Chile	39,600	8,450	213	7
Colombia	27,500	5,380	195	5
Costa Rica	5,000	1,110	221	1
Ecuador	6,000	1,240	206	1
Guatemala	3,500	749	214	1
India	29,000	4,430	153	5
Indonesia	23,500	4,600	196	4
Japan	40,100	7,940	198	7
Korea, Republic of	17,000	3,060	180	3
Malaysia	3,000	563	188	1
Mexico	99,300	23,400	235	18
Peru	15,000	3,400	227	3
Philippines	7,000	1,450	207	1
Saudi Arabia	857	141	165	(4)
South Africa	7,530	1,220	162	1
Taiwan	22,500	4,430	197	4
Thailand	33,000	7,380	224	6
United Arab Emirates	10,000	2,050	205	2
United Kingdom	8,520	1,640	192	2
Other	395	80	203	(4)
Total	559,000	115,000	206	100

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>February 2018 data were not available at time of publication.

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

<sup>4</sup>Less than 1/2 unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3  
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY, IN 2018<sup>1, 2</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	Quantity	January		
		Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Percent of total quantity
Bulgaria	342	\$125	\$366	44
China	57	29	513	7
Italy	190	27	140	24
Mexico	72	33	455	9
United Kingdom	94	73	782	12
Other	22	57	2,670	3
Total	776	344	443	100

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>February 2018 data were not available at time of publication.

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

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	
2017:						
January–December	12,000,000	6,990,000	19,100	--	42,700	5,040,000
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	557,000	2,750	--	10,600	449,000
June	1,020,000	510,000	2,210	15,000	--	500,000
July	1,020,000	637,000	1,730	--	68,600	452,000
August	997,000	567,000	1,190	6,830	--	425,000
September	989,000	593,000	898	7,080	--	390,000
October	1,040,000	591,000	1,290	--	14400	462,000
November	1,000,000	612,000	658	22,500	--	370,000
December	1,100,000	615,000	481	34,300	--	449,000
2018:						
January	992,000	559,000	776	13,700	--	421,000
February	945,000	NA	NA	--	1,610	NA

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	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter
3272	Glass:										
327213	Container	300	312	306	284	1,200	273	296	284	271	1,120
327211	Flat	249	265	252	254	1,020	242	252	235	259	989
327993	Fiber	41	41	40	40	161	36	36	36	36	144
327212	Other	32	33	31	30	126	27	27	25	26	105
	Total	622	650	629	608	2,510	577	611	581	592	2,360
32518	Chemicals	361	361	374	387	1,480	344	338	333	352	1,370
325611	Soaps and detergents	79	80	78	85	322	73	74	73	73	293
322	Pulp and paper	13	12	10	9	44	10	9	12	9	40
221310	Water treatment <sup>3</sup>	18	20	21	15	75	8	9	9	11	37
56221	Flue gas desulfurization	48	49	59	53	209	54	50	61	51	215
4246	Distributors	76	68	71	70	285	78	73	71	66	288
	Other	43	42	55	54	193	65	75	83	84	307
	Total domestic consumption <sup>4</sup>	1,260	1,280	1,300	1,280	5,120	1,210	1,240	1,220	1,240	4,910
	Exports <sup>5</sup>	1,580	1,690	1,640	1,710	6,610	1,690	1,630	1,830	1,790	6,940
	Canada	54	49	49	49	202	53	46	50	48	197
	Total industry sales <sup>6</sup>	2,840	2,970	2,930	2,990	11,700	2,890	2,870	3,060	3,030	11,800
	Total sales from plants	2,850	2,980	2,980	2,960	11,800	2,920	2,930	3,170	3,090	12,100
	Total production	2,870	2,930	3,010	3,000	11,800	2,860	2,960	3,010	3,140	12,000

<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.