

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN MAY 2018

U.S. natural soda ash production in May was 952,000 metric tons (t), slightly less than the previous month's production and 4% less than that of May 2017 (table 1). Ending stocks were 310,000 t, 3% less than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in May 2018 was 1.12 million metric tons (Mt), 24% less than that of April 2018 and 27% less than that of May 2017. Production of soda ash in the first 5 months of 2018 was slightly more than, and trona production was slightly less than that of the same period of 2017.

Exports of soda ash in April 2018 were 588,000 t, 12% less than those of March 2018 and 4% less than those of April 2017 (table 4). April 2018 imports of soda ash were 1,550 t, 10% less than those of March 2018 and 37% less than those of April 2017. Soda ash import tonnages can differ significantly from month to month, but generally are much smaller than soda ash export tonnages.

Apparent consumption for April 2018 was 371,000 t, an 8% increase from that of March 2018 and 25% more than that of April 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. For the first four months of 2018, apparent consumption was 1.54 Mt, slightly more than that of the same period of 2017.

All percentages in this report were calculated using unrounded data.

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TABLE 1
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production ²	Stocks, end of period	
2017:			
January–May	4,800	291	7,460
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	309	1,630
February	945	307	1,490
March	1,020	317	1,620
April	958	318	1,480
May	952	310	1,120
January–May	4,870	310	7,340

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 OR LOCALITY, IN 2018^{1, 2}

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	Quantity	April		January–April		
					Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Argentina	78	20	18,700	8,520	\$1,800	\$211	27,300	1	\$6,090
Australia	40,000	--	28,300	--	--	--	68,300	3	14,100
Belgium	213	--	126	189	21	110	528	(4)	58
Brazil	102,000	68,400	62,100	117,000	22,000	188	349,000	15	68,900
Canada	18,100	17,900	17,900	19,400	4,110	212	73,300	3	14,700
Chile	39,600	8,100	45,900	59,400	12,700	214	153,000	7	32,700
China	--	50,100	60	47,100	8,070	171	97,200	4	16,700
Colombia	27,500	12,000	21,500	18,700	3,680	197	79,700	3	15,900
Costa Rica	5,000	--	5,000	--	--	--	10,000	(4)	2,210
Ecuador	6,000	--	4,000	--	--	--	10,000	(4)	2,000
El Salvador	--	--	5,000	--	--	--	5,000	(4)	985
Guatemala	3,500	--	8,620	--	--	--	12,100	1	2,680
India	29,000	--	28,500	--	--	--	57,500	2	8,660
Indonesia	23,500	112,000	45,000	53,200	11,400	214	234,000	10	49,300
Ireland	101	--	262	108	24	218	470	(4)	75
Japan	40,100	21,500	30,500	3,500	640	183	95,600	4	18,000
Korea, Republic of	17,000	15,000	18,700	21,500	3,950	184	72,200	3	13,200
Malaysia	3,000	31,000	34,200	35,500	7,350	207	104,000	4	20,900
Mexico	99,300	83,800	114,000	98,400	23,400	237	396,000	17	92,000
Netherlands	--	--	12,000	--	--	--	12,000	1	2,400
New Zealand	--	--	6,000	--	--	--	6,000	(4)	1,040
Nigeria	--	--	10,000	8,000	2,480	310	18,000	1	5,580
Peru	15,000	--	13,500	75	8	110	28,600	1	6,330
Philippines	7,000	--	8,000	--	--	--	15,000	1	3,180
Saudi Arabia	857	11,100	11,600	98	37	380	23,600	1	3,670
South Africa	7,530	11,200	14,900	8,460	1,810	214	42,100	2	8,620
Spain	--	--	45	742	82	110	787	(4)	87
Taiwan	22,500	6,000	27,300	5,500	1,160	211	61,300	3	12,200
Thailand	33,000	25,500	18,400	21,000	4,700	224	97,900	4	21,300
Tunisia	--	--	--	25,000	5,520	221	25,000	1	5,520
United Arab Emirates	10,000	16,000	19,500	--	--	--	45,500	2	7,510
United Kingdom	8,520	5,070	16,100	--	--	--	29,700	1	5,710
Venezuela	--	5,170	--	12,300	3,310	270	17,400	1	4,530
Vietnam	--	35,400	25,000	24,100	5,260	218	84,500	4	17,900
Other	216	127	100	69	64	927	512	(4)	243
Total	559,000	536,000	671,000	588,000	123,000	210	2,350,000	100	485,000

-- Zero.

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

²May 2018 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 BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY, IN 2018^{1,2}

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	Quantity	April		Quantity	January–April	
					Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Unit value		Percent of total quantity	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Bulgaria	342	342	738	451	\$158	\$351	1,870	35	\$639
China	57	257	336	228	135	592	878	17	550
France	--	62	69	69	41	598	200	4	124
Italy	190	342	190	21	25	1,170	743	14	130
Mexico	72	182	267	470	165	351	991	19	365
United Kingdom	94	91	94	286	189	659	564	11	392
Other	22	6	15	19	83	4,460	62	1	249
Total	776	1,280	1,710	1,550	796	515	5,310	100	2,450

-- Zero.

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

²May 2018 data were not available at time of publication.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH¹

(Metric tons)

Period	Production	Exports	Imports	Net stock		Apparent consumption ²
				Increase	Decrease	
2017:						
January–December	12,000,000	6,990,000	19,100	--	42,700	5,040,000
January–April	3,800,000	2,310,000	7,910	--	34,800	1,540,000
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–April	3,920,000	2,350,000	5,310	24,700	--	1,540,000
January	992,000	559,000	776	15,700	--	419,000
February	945,000	536,000	1,280	--	1,710	412,000
March	1,020,000	671,000	1,710	9,160	--	342,000
April	958,000	588,000	1,550	1,580	--	371,000
May	951,000	NA	NA	--	8,440	NA

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.