

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN APRIL 2018*

U.S. natural soda ash production in April was 958,000 metric tons (t), 6% less than the previous month's production but slightly more than that of April 2017 (table 1). Ending stocks were 318,000 t, slightly more than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in April 2018 was 1.48 million metric tons (Mt), 9% less than that of March 2018 but 5% more than that of April 2017. Production of soda ash and trona in the first four months of 2018 were 3% and 5% more, respectively, than the same period of 2017.

Exports of soda ash in March 2018 were 671,000 t, 25% more than those of February 2018 and 11% more than those of March 2017 (table 4). March 2018 imports of soda ash were 1,710 t, 33% more than those of February 2018 but 3% less than those of March 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 March 2018 was 342,000 t, a 17% decrease from that of February 2018 and 26% less than that of March 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 quarter of 2018, apparent consumption was 1.17 Mt, 6% less than that of the first quarter of 2017.

Table 5 provides reported consumption statistics for the first quarter of 2018. During the first quarter, 577,000 t (47%) went to glassmaking and 345,000 t (28%) was consumed in the production of chemicals. Compared with that of the last quarter of 2017, the largest consumption increases were for pulp and paper (39%), distributors (23%), fiberglass (9%) and other glass (9%). Total consumption for the first quarter of 2018 was slightly more than that of the first quarter of 2017. Consumption increased in every category except flat glass and flue gas desulfurization.

All percentages in this report were calculated using unrounded data.

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*Corrections posted on July 9, 2018.

TABLE 1
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production ²	Stocks, end of period	
2017:			
January–April	3,800	301	5,930
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	309 ^r	1,630
February	945	307 ^r	1,490
March	1,020	317 ^r	1,620
April	958	318	1,480
January–April	3,920	318	6,220

^rRevised.

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	Quantity	March		January–March		
				Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Australia	78	20	18,700	\$4,260	\$228	18,800	1	\$4,300
Australia	40,000	--	28,300	5,890	208	68,300	4	14,100
Belgium	213	--	126	14	110	338	(4)	37
Brazil	102,000	68,400	62,100	13,000	209	232,000	13	46,900
Canada	18,100	17,900	17,900	3,550	198	53,900	3	10,500
Chile	39,600	8,100	45,900	9,780	213	93,600	5	20,000
China	--	50,100	60	17	276	50,100	3	8,590
Colombia	27,500	12,000	21,500	4,240	197	61,000	3	12,300
Costa Rica	5,000	--	5,000	1,100	221	10,000	1	2,210
Ecuador	6,000	--	4,000	759	190	10,000	1	2,000
El Salvador	--	--	5,000	985	197	5,000	(4)	985
Guatemala	3,500	--	8,620	1,930	223	12,100	1	2,680
India	29,000	--	28,500	4,230	148	57,500	3	8,660
Indonesia	23,500	112,000	45,000	9,640	214	181,000	10	37,900
Ireland	101	--	262	29	110	362	(4)	52
Japan	40,100	21,500	30,500	5,600	184	92,100	5	17,300
Korea, Republic of	17,000	15,000	18,700	3,480	187	50,700	3	9,290
Malaysia	3,000	31,000	34,200	6,840	200	68,200	4	13,600
Mexico	99,300	83,800	114,000	25,400	222	298,000	17	68,700
Netherlands	--	--	12,000	2,400	200	12,000	1	2,400
New Zealand	--	--	6,000	1,040	173	6,000	(4)	1,040
Nigeria	--	--	10,000	3,100	310	10,000	1	3,100
Peru	15,000	--	13,500	2,920	216	28,500	2	6,320
Philippines	7,000	--	8,000	1,730	216	15,000	1	3,180
Saudi Arabia	857	11,100	11,600	1,780	154	23,500	1	3,630
South Africa	7,530	11,200	14,900	3,190	214	33,700	2	6,810
Taiwan	22,500	6,000	27,300	5,440	199	55,800	3	11,100
Thailand	33,000	25,500	18,400	3,980	216	76,900	4	16,600
United Arab Emirates	10,000	16,000	19,500	2,980	153	45,500	3	7,510
United Kingdom	8,520	5,070	16,100	3,100	192	29,700	2	5,710
Venezuela	--	5,170	--	--	--	5,170	(4)	1,220
Vietnam	--	35,400	25,000	5,310	213	60,400	3	12,700
Other	216 ^r	127 ^r	144	106	734	487	(4)	184
Total	559,000	536,000	671,000	138,000	205	1,770,000	100	362,000

^rRevised. --Zero.

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

²April 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	Quantity	March		Quantity	January–March	
				Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Unit value		Percent of total quantity	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Bulgaria	342	342	738	\$231	\$313	1,420	38	\$481
China	57	257	336	221	657	650	17	415
France	--	62	69	36	526	130	3	82
Italy	190	342	190	28	148	722	19	105
Mexico	72	182	267	98	369	521	14	200
United Kingdom	94	91	94	71	758	278	7	204
Other	22	6 ^r	15	38	2,480	43	1	166
Total	776	1,280	1,710	724	423	3,770	100	1,650

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²April 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–March	2,860,000	1,700,000	5,460	--	78,800	1,240,000
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–March	2,960,000	1,770,000	3,770	24,700	--	1,170,000
January	992,000	559,000	776	15,700 ^r	--	419,000 ^r
February	945,000	536,000	1,280	--	1,710 ^r	412,000
March	1,020,000	671,000	1,710	9,160 ^r	--	342,000
April	958,000	NA	NA	1,580	--	NA

^rRevised. 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.

TABLE 5
REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH IN THE UNITED STATES, BY END USE, BY QUARTER¹

(Thousand metric tons)

NAICS ² code	End use	2017					2018
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter	1st quarter*
3272	Glass:						
327213	Container	273	296	284	271	1,120	280
327211	Flat	242	252	235	259	989	230
327993	Fiber	36	36	36	36	144	39
327212	Other	27	27	25	26	105	28
	Total	577	611	581	592	2,360	577
32518	Chemicals	344	338	333	352	1,370	345
325611	Soaps and detergents	73	74	73	73	293	79
322	Pulp and paper	10	9	12	9	40	12
221310	Water treatment ³	8	9	9	11	37	11
56221	Flue gas desulfurization	54	50	61	51	215	46
4246	Distributors	78	73	71	66	288	82
	Other	65	75	83	84	307	71
	Total domestic consumption ⁴	1,210	1,240	1,220	1,240	4,910	1,220
	Exports ⁵	1,690	1,630	1,830	1,790	6,940	1,770
	Canada	53	46	50	48	197	47
	Total industry sales ⁶	2,890	2,870	3,060	3,030	11,800	2,990
	Total sales from plants	2,920	2,930	3,170	3,090	12,100	2,960
	Total production	2,860	2,960	3,010	3,140	12,000	2,960

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

²North American Industry Classification System.

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

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

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

⁶Represents 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.

*Corrections posted on July 9, 2018.