

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SODA ASH IN DECEMBER 2018

U.S. natural soda ash production in December was 1.01 million metric tons (Mt), a slight increase compared with that of the previous month's production but 8% less than that of December 2017. Ending stocks were 297,000 metric tons (t), 4% less than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in December 2018 was 1.47 Mt, slightly less than that of November 2018 and 14% less than that of December 2017. Soda ash production in 2018 was 11.8 Mt, slightly less than the production of 2017 (table 1).

Exports of soda ash in December 2018 were 698,000 t, 38% more than those of November 2018 and 13% more than those of December 2017. For 2018, exports totaled 6.96 Mt, slightly less than the amount exported in 2017 (tables 2, 4).

December 2018 imports of soda ash were 627 t, 63% less than those of November 2018 and 30% more than those of December 2017. For 2018, imports totaled 16,300 t, 15% less than the amount exported in 2017 (table 3, 4). Soda ash import tonnages can differ significantly from month to month, but generally are much smaller than soda ash export tonnages.

Apparent consumption for December 2018 was 321,000 t, a 24% decrease from that of November 2018 and a 28% decrease from that of December 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 2018, apparent consumption was 4.89 Mt, 3% less than that of 2017 (table 4).

Table 5 provides reported soda ash consumption statistics for the fourth quarter of 2018. Reported consumption for the fourth quarter was 1.2 Mt, 3% less than the reported consumption for the fourth quarter of 2017. During the fourth quarter, 557,000 t (46%) went to glassmaking and 372,000 t (31%) was consumed in the production of chemicals.

All percentages in this report were calculated using unrounded data.

Note: The annual average value of U.S. soda ash production for 2018 was \$134.89 per short ton, a slight increase compared with the 2017 average value of \$132.68 per short ton.

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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:			
December	1,100	293	1,710
January–December	12,000	293	18,000
2018:			
January	992	314	1,630
February	945	310	1,490
March	1,020	240	1,620
April	966	267	1,480
May	952	259	1,450
June	961	248	1,420
July	1,070	282	1,490
August	930	293 ^r	1,180
September	988	268	1,320
October	1,010	237	1,500
November	997	309	1,490
December	1,010	297	1,470
January–December	11,800	297	17,500

^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 2018¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December			January–December		
												Quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)
Argentina	78	20	18,700	8,500	17,200	11,700	6,560	--	6,060	8,600	--	17,600	\$4,220	\$240	95,000	1	\$21,600
Australia	40,000	--	28,300	--	33,000	33,000	26,500	--	41,500	--	35,000	28,400	6,300	222	266,000	4	55,700
Brazil	102,000	68,400	62,100	117,000	30,200	81,700	65,200	74,100	23,000	139,000	14,100	84,600	17,000	201	861,000	12	173,000
Canada	18,100	17,900	17,900	19,400	21,300	13,200	17,000	14,200	17,600	16,100	17,700	17,400	3,800	218	208,000	3	43,600
Chile	39,600	8,100	45,900	59,400	34,600	38,400	49,400	--	51,700	40,300	13,900	84,500	18,300	217	466,000	7	101,000
China	--	50,100	60	47,100	60	10,100	--	40,100	47,100	62	59,100	--	--	--	254,000	4	43,800
Colombia	27,500	12,000	21,500	18,700	5,060	21,500	--	22,100	--	31,400	--	16,500	3,440	208	176,000	3	36,900
Costa Rica	5,000	--	5,000	--	--	5,000	--	5,500	--	6,000	--	4,000	880	220	30,500	(3)	6,970
Ecuador	6,000	--	4,000	--	7,150	--	--	8,200	--	7,150	--	--	--	--	32,500	(3)	6,660
El Salvador	--	--	5,000	--	--	3,000	5,000	--	--	--	--	5,000	985	197	18,000	(3)	3,580
Guatemala	3,500	--	8,600	--	8,860	5,000	7,700	--	--	11,200	--	10,200	2,270	222	55,100	1	12,200
India	29,000	--	28,500	--	--	--	16,000	--	10,000	19,000	34	36,000	6,860	191	139,000	2	22,700
Indonesia	23,500	112,000	45,000	53,200	48,900	18,700	68,500	15,700	67,300	37,000	76,400	44,300	9,880	223	611,000	9	132,000
Japan	40,100	21,500	30,500	3,500	26,000	32,300	22,800	21,900	6,780	42,100	3,760	62,300	12,400	200	313,000	5	58,000
Korea, Republic of	17,000	15,000	18,700	21,500	27,700	18,000	31,700	34,100	39,100	27,300	18,800	41,600	9,040	217	311,000	4	61,700
Malaysia	3,000	31,000	34,200	35,500	28,100	23,000	46,000	45,000	14,000	60,600	26,000	31,700	6,390	201	378,000	5	77,800
Mexico	99,300	83,800	114,000	98,400	109,000	130,000	118,000	109,000	111,000	111,000	96,200	120,000	25,900	216	1,300,000	19	302,000
Netherlands	--	--	12,000	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	12,000	(3)	2,400
New Zealand	--	--	6,000	--	--	--	7,600	--	--	--	--	5,500	927	169	19,100	(3)	3,270
Nigeria	--	--	10,000	8,000	134	--	8,000	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	26,100	(3)	8,080
Peru	15,000	--	13,500	75	22,200	75	75	15,100	75	17,100	--	13,100	2,950	225	96,200	1	21,200
Philippines	7,000	--	8,000	--	9,000	--	--	9,500	11,000	--	11,000	--	--	--	55,500	1	12,100
Saudi Arabia	857	11,100	11,600	98	59	23,500	--	271	4,500	1,830	4,720	203	22	108	58,700	1	8,940
South Africa	7,530	11,200	14,900	8,460	--	7,480	--	7,580	7,830	7,500	--	7,540	1,260	167	80,100	1	15,600
Taiwan	22,500	6,000	27,300	5,500	28,000	--	25,000	14,300	17,500	28,700	9,000	23,000	4,880	212	207,000	3	43,200
Thailand	33,000	25,500	18,400	21,000	42,100	17,000	24,000	34,900	36,900	36,400	30,400	25,300	5,510	218	345,000	5	76,500
Tunisia	--	--	--	25,000	--	--	27,000	--	--	--	25,000	--	--	--	77,000	1	16,900
United Arab Emirates	10,000	16,000	19,500	--	--	18,500	--	--	10,500	--	15,500	--	--	--	90,000	1	14,300
United Kingdom	8,520	5,070	16,100	--	15,400	--	14,200	--	--	--	15,000	--	--	--	74,400	1	14,400
Venezuela	--	5,170	--	12,300	--	--	--	11,100	5,070	--	--	7,000	1,800	257	40,600	1	10,500
Vietnam	--	35,400	25,000	24,100	29,000	--	21,500	59,000	--	20,000	33,500	12,000	2,570	214	259,000	4	55,700
Other	530 ^r	126 ^r	532 ^r	1,110 ^r	1,370 ^r	390 ^r	729 ^r	848 ^r	1,020 ^r	1,400 ^r	1,010 ^r	412	68	165	9,460	(3)	1,530
Total	559,000	536,000	671,000	588,000	544,000	512,000	608,000	542,000	530,000	670,000	506,000	698,000	148,000	212	6,960,000	100	1,460,000

¹Revised. -- Zero.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

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

^rLess than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY, IN 2018¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December			January–December		
												Quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)
Bulgaria	342	342	738	451	342	126	612	324	450	270	414	216	\$42	\$196	4,630	28	\$1,590
China	57	257	336	228	241	76	100	93	152	150	135	58	40	691	1,880	12	1,170
France	--	62	69	69	19	19	69	19	--	39	175	108	40	375	646	4	337
Germany	1	3	1	4	61	3	2	--	1	2	2	(3)	2	(3)	80	(3)	378
Italy	190	342	190	21	398	791	604	--	17	931	532	--	--	--	4,020	25	802
Japan	5	--	4	7	13	--	6	15	15	8	--	1	4	6,200	74	(3)	202
Mexico	72	182	267	470	136	132	36	422	497	240	340	154	59	383	2,950	18	1,080
Poland	--	--	--	--	116	--	58	57	152	--	--	--	--	--	383	2	164
Romania	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	57	152	--	--	--	--	210	1	90
United Kingdom	94	91	94	286	86	73	70	92	161	143	115	91	59	653	1,390	9	929
Other	16	3	10	8	8	11	4	--	2	1	5	(3)	5	(3)	68	(3)	96
Total	776	1,280	1,710	1,540	1,420	1,230	1,560	1,020	1,510	1,940	1,720	627	252	401	16,300	100	6,840

-- Zero.

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

²Cost, insurance, and freight values at U.S. ports.

³Less than ½ unit.

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
December	1,100,000	615,000	481	34,300	--	449,000
2018:						
January–December	11,800,000	6,960,000	16,300	3,910	--	4,890,000
January	992,000	559,000	776	20,600	--	414,000
February	945,000	536,000	1,280	--	3,560	414,000
March	1,020,000	671,000	1,710	--	70,800	422,000
April	966,000	588,000	1,550	27,700	--	352,000
May	952,000	544,000	1,420	--	8,440	417,000
June	961,000	512,000	1,230	--	10,400	461,000
July	1,070,000	609,000	1,560	34,000	--	428,000
August	930,000	542,000	1,020	10,600	--	378,000
September	988,000	529,000	1,510	--	24,700	485,000
October	1,010,000	670,000	1,940	--	31,800	376,000
November	997,000	506,000	1,720	72,500	--	420,000
December	1,010,000	698,000	627	--	11,700	321,000

-- 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	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter
3272	Glass:										
327213	Container	273	296	284	271	1,120	279	284	257	233	1,050
327211	Flat	242	252	235	259	989	222	243	240	256	960
327993	Fiber	36	36	36	36	144	39	40	43	42	165
327212	Other	27	27	25	26	105	26	25	25	26	102
	Total	577	611	581	592	2,360	566	591	565	557	2,280
32518	Chemicals	344	338	333	352	1,370	338	369	356	372	1,440
325611	Soaps and detergents	73	74	73	73	293	79	66	72	70	287
322	Pulp and paper	10	9	12	9	40	12	13	11	11	47
221310	Water treatment ³	8	9	9	11	37	11	12	12	9	44
56221	Flue gas desulfurization	54	50	61	51	215	47	43	52	49	191
4246	Distributors	78	73	71	66	288	79	74	75	74	302
	Other	65	75	83	84	307	71	69	65	59	265
	Total domestic consumption ⁴	1,210	1,240	1,220	1,240	4,910	1,200	1,240	1,210	1,200	4,850
	Exports ⁵	1,690	1,630	1,830	1,790	6,940	1,750	1,590	1,720	1,760	6,820
	Canada	53	46	50	48	197	47	49	47	48	190
	Total industry sales ⁶	2,890	2,870	3,060	3,030	11,800	2,950	2,830	2,930	2,960	11,700
	Total sales from plants	2,920	2,930	3,170	3,090	12,100	3,010	2,860	3,020	3,030	11,900
	Total production	2,860	2,960	3,010	3,140	12,000	2,960	2,880	2,990	3,020	11,800

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.