

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

Wallace P. Bolen, Soda Ash Commodity Specialist
National Minerals Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-7727, Fax: (703) 648-7757
Email: wbolen@usgs.gov

Annie Hwang (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7952
Fax: (703) 648-7975
Email: ahwang@usgs.gov

Internet: <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic>

SODA ASH IN MARCH 2019

U.S. natural soda ash production in March was 941,000 metric tons (t), a slight increase compared with that of the previous month's revised production of 920,000 t but 8% less than that of March 2018. Ending stocks were 277,000 t, 3% more than the preceding month's inventories. Soda ash production for the first quarter of 2019 was 2.86 million metric tons (Mt), 3% less than the same period of 2018 (table 1,4).

Wyoming trona production in March 2019 was 1.68 Mt, 12% more than that of February 2019 and 3% more than that of March 2018. For the first quarter of 2019, trona production was 4.86 Mt, 3% more than that of the same period of 2018.

Exports of soda ash in March 2019 were 508,000 t, 18% less than those of February 2019 and 24% less than those of March 2018. For the first quarter 2019, exports were 1.72 Mt, 3% less than those of the same period of 2018 (tables 2, 4).

March 2019 imports of soda ash were 1,040 t, 17% less than those of February 2019 and 39% less than those of March 2018. For the first quarter of 2019, imports were 3,270t, 13% less than those of the same period of 2018 (tables 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 March 2019 was 426,000 t, a 29% increase from that of February 2019 but slightly more than that of March 2018. For the first quarter of 2019 apparent consumption was 1.17 Mt, 6% less than that of the first quarter of 2018. 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 (table 4).

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	
2018:			
January–March	2,960	240 ^r	4,730 ^r
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	1,180
September	988	268	1,320
October	1,010	237	1,500
November	997	309	1,490
December	1,060 ^r	297	1,580 ^r
January–December	11,900 ^r	297	17,600 ^r
2019:			
January	1,000 ^r	300	1,680 ^r
February	920 ^r	270	1,500 ^r
March	941	277	1,680
January–March	2,860	277	4,860

^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 2019¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	Quantity	March		January–March		
				Value ² (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)
Argentina	7,000	7,700	--	--	--	14,700	1	\$3,430
Australia	35,000	4,040	34,000	\$7,480	\$220	73,000	4	15,900
Brazil	94,500	104,000	35,000	6,790	194	233,000	14	49,500
Canada	15,800	17,500	15,200	3,650	240	48,500	3	11,300
Chile	13,000	45,200	31,500	7,340	233	89,700	5	20,600
Colombia	8,000	21,400	10,500	2,480	236	39,900	2	9,160
Ecuador	9,500	--	10,000	2,290	229	19,500	1	4,390
Guatemala	4,000	7,000	--	--	--	11,000	1	2,490
India	--	43,500	--	--	--	43,500	3	7,540
Indonesia	88,100	21,300	90,800	20,500	226	200,000	12	45,200
Japan	3,000	34,400	15,100	2,860	189	52,500	3	10,500
Korea, Republic of	11,500	18,000	15,700	3,290	210	45,300	3	9,500
Malaysia	46,100	62,800	52,500	11,900	227	161,000	9	35,500
Mexico	144,000	106,000	112,000	25,700	229	362,000	21	82,100
Nigeria	--	10,000	--	--	--	10,000	1	3,380
Peru	17,000	--	16,300	3,670	225	33,300	2	7,480
Saudi Arabia	98	10,300	39	15	385	10,400	1	1,830
South Africa	--	10,100	--	--	--	10,100	1	2,240
Taiwan	16,500	9,500	15,200	4,310	284	41,200	2	10,000
Thailand	35,100	26,600	35,600	8,300	233	97,300	6	22,700
Tunisia	--	20,000	--	--	--	20,000	1	4,900
United Arab Emirates	--	15,500	--	--	--	15,500	1	2,720
Vietnam	31,000	15,000	18,500	4,180	226	64,500	4	14,400
Other	7,980 ^r	11,700 ^r	462	112	243	20,100	1	276
Total	587,000	621,000	508,000	115,000	226	1,720,000	100	377,000

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²Free alongside ship values at U.S. ports.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY, IN 2019¹

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Country or locality	January	February	Quantity	March		January–March		
				Value ² (thousand dollars)	Unit value	Quantity	Percent of total quantity	Value ² (thousand dollars)
Bulgaria	288	612	432	\$158	\$366	1,330	41	\$487
China	77	72	180	114	634	330	10	215
France	44	91	41	27	655	176	5	228
Mexico	304	97	252	87	344	653	20	235
Romania	95	172	38	18	462	305	9	134
United Kingdom	146	197	91	62	683	434	13	290
Other	24	9	3	12	3,891	35	1	114
Total	978	1,250	1,040	477	459	3,260	100	1,700

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.

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	
2018:						
January–December	11,900,000 ^r	6,960,000	16,300	3,910	--	4,940,000
January–March	2,960,000	1,770,000	3,770	-- ^r	53,800 ^r	1,250,000 ^r
March	1,020,000	671,000	1,710	--	70,800	422,000
April	966,000	588,000	1,540 ^r	27,700	--	352,000
May	952,000	544,000	1,420	--	8,440	417,000 ^r
June	961,000	512,000	1,230	--	10,400	461,000
July	1,070,000	609,000	1,560	34,000	--	428,000 ^r
August	930,000	542,000	1,020	10,600	--	378,000
September	988,000	529,000	1,500 ^r	--	24,700	485,000
October	1,010,000	670,000	1,940	--	31,800	376,000 ^r
November	997,000	506,000	1,720	72,500	--	420,000
December	1,060,000 ^r	698,000	627	--	11,700	374,000 ^r
2019:						
January–March	2,860,000	1,720,000	3,260	--	20,700	1,170,000
January	1,000,000 ^r	587,000	978	2,640	--	415,000 ^r
February	920,000 ^r	621,000	1,250	--	30,500	331,000 ^r
March	941,000	508,000	1,040	7,130	--	426,000

^rRevised. -- 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.