

Mineral Industry Surveys

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TIN IN APRIL 2012

Domestic consumption of primary tin in April 2012 was estimated to be 2,300 metric tons (t), a slight decrease from that in March 2012, and a slight decrease from that in April 2011. Imports of refined tin in the first 4 months of 2012 were 12,600 t, a decrease of 11% compared with those of the comparable period of 2011. The leading suppliers of refined tin to the United States during the first 4 months of 2012 in descending order were Peru, Bolivia, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The Platts Metals Week average composite price of tin in April 2012 was \$13.45 per pound, compared with \$13.98 per pound in March 2012 and \$19.42 in April 2011.

A recent report from Bryon Capital Markets Ltd. (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) predicted an increase in demand and prices for tin. The report indicated that the increased demand would be because tin was a key component in solders that must meet the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) directives implemented in the European Union (EU) in 2006. The directive recognized that a large proportion of waste from electronic devices would never be recycled, and that the materials within these devices, including lead, mercury, cadmium, and hexavalent chromium, would eventually dissipate into the environment. As a result, the EU decreed that substances like solder, at least within devices intended for sale in the region, must not contain any of these hazardous materials. Because of

that law, in 2006, the search for a new solder component standard in the electronics industry began, resulting in a new alloy of silver and tin, Bryon Capital noted that from 2004 to 2011, the price of tin rose markedly. Many electronics manufacturers decided to use lead-free solders on all versions of their products, whether shipping to regions in which RoHS regulations pertain, or not, since it was logistically simpler. The report observed that a shortfall of tin supply was of particular concern, since increases in tin mine production were modest. The report suggested that world noninvestment demand for tin could jump from about 362,000 t in 2011 to more than 544,000 t by 2020 (Sterescu, 2012).

Update

On August 10, 2012, the Platts Metals Week composite price for tin was \$10.96 per pound.

Reference Cited

Sterescu, Deborah, 2012, Silver and tin—2 new critical electric markets, says Bryon Capital: Proactive Investors, April 23. (Accessed August 15, 2012, at <http://www.proactiveinvestors.com/companies/news/28075/silver-and-tin-2-new-critical-electric-metals-says-byron-capital--28075.html>.)

TABLE 1
SALIENT TIN STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

	2012			
	2011 ^p	March	April	January– April
Production, secondary ^{e,2}	11,100	922	922	3,690
Consumption:				
Primary	28,300	2,340 ^r	2,300	9,100
Secondary	6,280	528	529	2,110
Imports for consumption, metal	34,200	3,140	1,990	12,600
Exports, metal	5,450	316	636	1,660
Stocks at end of period	5,230	6,780	6,710	6,710
Prices (average cents per pound): ³				
Metals Week composite ⁴	1,574.67	1,398.32	1,345.29	XX
Metals Week New York dealer	1,215.90	1,077.78	1,039.61	XX
London, standard grade, cash	1,184.05	1,043.38	1,001.50	XX
Kuala Lumpur	1,187.54	1,051.43	1,008.27	XX

^eEstimated. ^pPreliminary. ^rRevised. XX Not applicable.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices.

²Includes tin recovered from alloys and tinplate. The detinning of tinplate (coated steel) yields only a small part of the total.

³Source: Platts Metals Week.

⁴The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges and a risk factor. It is normally substantially higher than other tin prices.

TABLE 2
METALS WEEK COMPOSITE PRICE¹

(Cents per pound)

Period	High	Low	Average
2011	1,884.94	856.78	1,574.67
2012:			
January	1,461.15	1,181.94	1,298.79
February	1,533.15	1,432.52	1,472.78
March	1,719.32	1,020.42	1,398.32
April	1,400.86	1,288.87	1,345.29

¹The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges and a risk factor. It is normally substantially higher than other tin prices.

Source: Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 3
TINPLATE PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Period	Tinplate waste (waste, strips, cobble, etc.) (gross weight)	Tinplate (all forms)			Shipments ²
		Gross weight	Tin content	Tin per metric ton of plate (kilograms)	
2011	21,500	1,230,000	6,330	5.2	1,680,000
2012:					
January	1,070	64,000	461	7.2	107,000
February	1,430	71,900	498	6.9	121,000
March	1,250	96,300 ^r	556	5.8 ^r	156,000
April	1,240	86,700	522	6.0	140,000

^rRevised.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Source: American Iron and Steel Institute monthly publication.

TABLE 4
U.S. TIN IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS¹

(Metric tons)

Country or product	2011	2012		January– April ²
		March	April	
Imports:				
Metal (unwrought tin):				
Belgium	261	4	2	513
Bolivia	5,680	599	191	1,720
Brazil	676	235	151	675
Chile	60	--	--	--
China	1,490	20	20	82
Indonesia	4,930	291	232	1,270
Malaysia	3,980	100	250	1,620
Peru	14,000	1,610	641	5,760
Singapore	645	--	--	--
Thailand	2,310	75	300	575
Other	156	209	202	416
Total	34,200	3,140	1,990	12,600
Other (gross weight):				
Alloys	2,000	111	140	492
Bars and rods	2,620	131	120	606
Foil, tubes, pipes	113	6	2	26
Plates, sheets, strip	52	2	(3)	9
Waste and scrap	57,700	5,930	7,280	25,600
Miscellaneous	2,740	129	208	682
Total	65,300	6,310	7,750	27,400
Exports (metal)	5,450	316	636	1,660

-- Zero.

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

²May include revisions.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
CONSUMPTION OF TIN IN THE UNITED STATES, BY FINISHED PRODUCT¹

(Metric tons of contained tin)

Product	2012							
	2011 ^P	March			April			January– April ²
		Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	
Alloys (miscellaneous) ³	6,550	543	3	546	539	3	542	2,190
Babbitt	222	17	W	17	16	W	16	75
Bronze and brass	3,410	131 ^r	74	205 ^r	158	75	233	808
Chemicals	2,640	233	W	233	205	W	205	893
Solder	3,630	185	W	185	185	W	185	1,310
Tinning	325	21	--	21	21	--	21	87
Tinplate ⁴	6,350	556	--	556	522	--	522	2,040
Other ⁵	701 ^r	50	151	201	50	151	201	216
Total reported	23,800	1,740 ^r	228	1,960 ^r	1,700	229	1,930	7,610
Estimated undistributed consumption ⁶	10,800	600	300	900	600	300	900	3,600
Grand total	34,600	2,340 ^r	528	2,860 ^r	2,300	529	2,830	11,200

^PPreliminary. ^rRevised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other." -- Zero.

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

²May include revisions.

³Includesterne metal.

⁴Includes secondary pig tin and tin components of tinplating chemical solutions.

⁵Includes bar tin and anodes, collapsible tubes and foil, tinpowder, type metal and white metal.

⁶Estimated consumption of plants reporting on an annual basis.