

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE THIRD QUARTER 2019

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the third quarter of 2019 were 929,000 metric tons (t), 10% less than those in the second quarter of 2019, 5% less than those in the third quarter of 2018, but slightly more than those in the third quarter of 2017 (fig. 1). Jamaica (75%), Brazil (17%), and Guinea (6%) were the leading sources of crude and dried bauxite imports in the third quarter of 2019 (table 1).

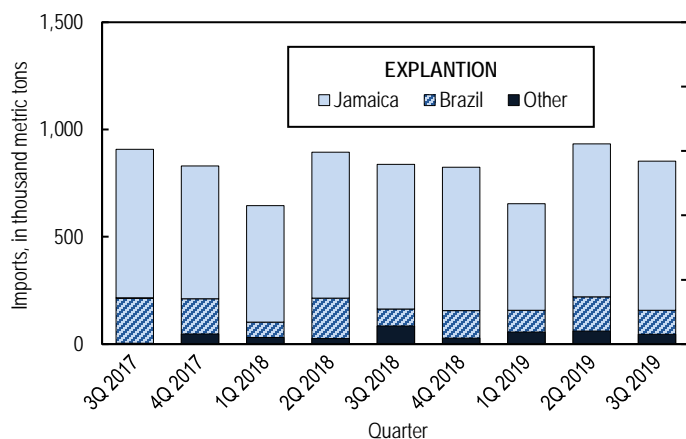


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the third quarter of 2017 through the third quarter of 2019. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the third quarter of 2019 were 479,000 t, 30% more than the revised amount in the second quarter of 2019, 8% more than those in the third quarter of 2018, and 31% more than those in the third quarter of 2017 (fig. 2). The leading sources of imported alumina in the second quarter of 2019 were Brazil (60%), Australia (20%), and Jamaica (7%) (table 3).

Exports of alumina during the third quarter of 2019 were 34,500 t, 16% less than those in the second quarter of 2019, 39% less than those in the third quarter of 2018, and 67% less than those in the third quarter of 2017 (fig. 2). The leading

destinations for alumina exported in the third quarter of 2019 were Mexico (29%) and Canada (21%) (table 3).

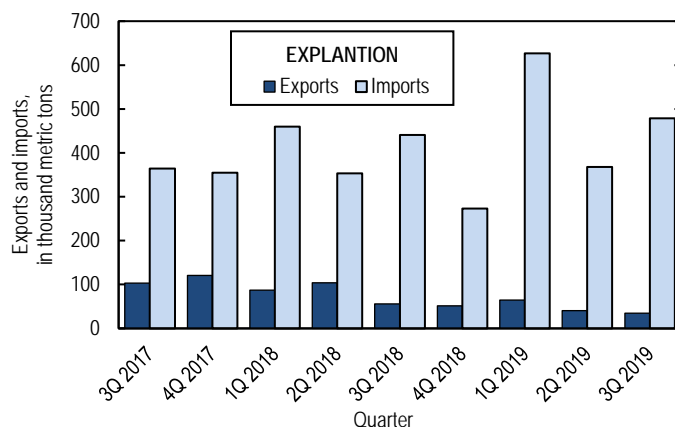


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the third quarter of 2017 through the third quarter of 2019. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

In October, Jiuquan Iron and Steel Co. (JISCO) suspended production from the Alpart alumina refinery and the adjacent bauxite mine for a modernization project at the refinery. The refinery's capacity was 1.65 million-metric-tons-per-year (Mt/yr) and the capacity of the bauxite mine was 4.9 Mt/yr but the refinery only produced 800,000 to 900,000 t in 2018. JISCO cited high production costs, difficulty obtaining spare parts for its aging equipment, low alumina prices, and safety issues as reasons for the project. The project was scheduled to be completed in 18 to 24 months and would increase the refinery capacity to 2 Mt/yr (Aluminium Insider, 2019; Lim, 2019; Mason, 2019; Mok, 2019).

References Cited

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- Lim, Joanna, 2019, Jamaica's Alpart alumina refinery set for major overhaul: Platts Metals Daily, v. 8, no. 170, August 29, p. 1–2.
- Mason, Alice, 2019, Alpart shutdown said unlikely to dent market: Fastmarkets AMM, v. 127, no. 36–1, September 2, p. 12.

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TABLE 1
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CRUDE AND DRIED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2018	2019			
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	1st quarter– 3d quarter
Imports for consumption:					
Brazil	637,000	157,000	220,000	157,000	534,000
Guinea	--	--	--	52,800	52,800
Jamaica ²	2,570,000	498,000	713,000	696,000	1,910,000
Turkey	84,500	89,500	99,100	22,100	211,000
Other	201,000 ^r	3,290 ^r	3,240 ^r	617	7,150
Total	3,490,000	748,000	1,030,000	929,000	2,710,000
Exports:					
Canada	2,880	277	768	541	1,590
Other	1,530	215	354	292	861
Total	4,410	492	1,120	833	2,450

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF CALCINED BAUXITE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	2019									
	2018		1st quarter		2d quarter		3d quarter		1st quarter– 3d quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports for consumption:										
Australia	--	115,000	--	54,200	--	54,000	--	49,500	--	158,000
China	43,400	10,000	4,990	1,780	3,510	790	4,040	4,010	12,500	6,580
Guyana	58,100	146,000	8,780	23,700	23,600	23,200	13,500	47,100	45,900	94,000
India	712	753	--	--	125	--	--	--	125	--
Other	373	636	282	5	323	3,600	44	2	649	3,610
Total	103,000	273,000	14,100	79,700	27,600	81,600	17,600	101,000	59,200	262,000
Exports:										
Canada	5,210	--	853	--	1,360	--	1,110	--	3,320	--
China	583	--	149	--	181	--	100	--	430	--
Mexico	733	--	415	--	141	--	195	--	751	--
Other	669	289	203	33	421	1	70	--	694	34
Total	7,190	289	1,620	33	2,100	1	1,470	--	5,190	34

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF ALUMINA, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

(Metric tons, calcined equivalent)

Country or locality	2019				
	2018	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	1st quarter– 3d quarter
Imports for consumption: ²					
Australia	293,000	166,000	47,000	96,600	310,000
Brazil	858,000	296,000	234,000	288,000	819,000
Canada	89,200	20,000	20,800	21,300	62,100
Jamaica ³	141,000	90,600 ^r	33,400 ^r	31,700	156,000
Other	147,000 ^r	53,700 ^r	33,200 ^r	40,800	128,000
Total	1,530,000	627,000 ^r	368,000 ^r	479,000	1,470,000
Exports: ⁴					
Canada	34,100	9,070	9,280	7,350	25,700
China	26,300	967	1,200	1,290	3,460
Iceland	14	--	--	--	--
India	9,270	4,340	1,030	721	6,090
Mexico	59,400	14,700	12,200	10,000	36,800
Netherlands	28,600	1,020	1,780	1,110	3,900
Norway	26,100	69	32	36	137
Russia	355	262	165	28	455
United Arab Emirates	1,190	256	167	36	459
Venezuela	55,700	20,800	18	--	20,800
Other	47,200	13,300	15,000	13,900	42,200
Total	288,000	64,800	40,800	34,500	140,000

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²Includes imports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 455,782 metric tons (t) in 2018; 99,610 t in the first quarter of 2019; 93,660 t in the second quarter of 2019; 109,261 t in the third quarter.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 90,331 t in 2018; 26,228 t in the first quarter of 2019; 26,942 t in the second quarter of 2019; 20,349 t in the third quarter.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; data adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.