

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

E. Lee Bray, Bauxite and Alumina Commodity Specialist
National Minerals Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-4979, Fax: (703) 648-7757
Email: lbray@usgs.gov

Susan M. Weaver (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7979
Fax: (703) 648-7995
Email: sweaver@usgs.gov

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

BAUXITE AND ALUMINA IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2021

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the first quarter of 2021 were 695,000 metric tons (t), 11% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2020, 10% less than those in the first quarter of 2020, and 7% less than those in the first quarter of 2019. Jamaica (92%) and Turkey (8%) were the leading sources of crude and dried bauxite imports in the first quarter of 2021 (fig. 1, table 1).

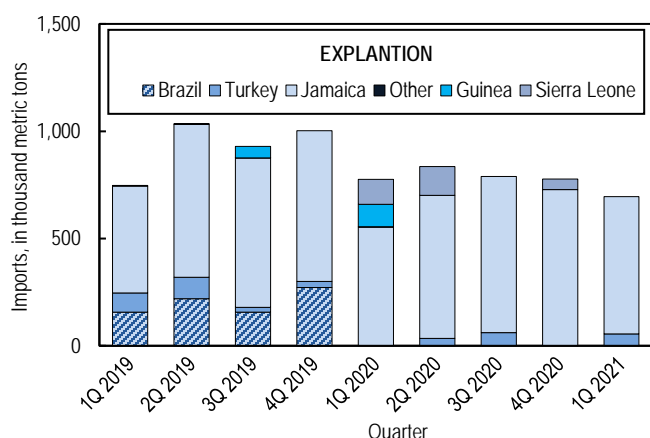


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the first quarter of 2019 through the first quarter of 2021. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the first quarter of 2021 were 416,000 t, 33% more than those in the fourth quarter of 2020, 16% more than the amount in the first quarter of 2020, but 33% less than those in the first quarter of 2019. The leading sources of imported alumina in the first quarter of 2021 were Brazil (53%), Jamaica (19%), and Australia (16%) (fig. 2, table 3).

Exports of alumina during the first quarter of 2021 were 46,800 t, 7% less than those in the fourth quarter of 2020, 22% more than those in the first quarter of 2020, but 28% less than those in the first quarter of 2019. The leading destinations for alumina exported in the first quarter of 2021 were Mexico (34%), Canada (14%), the Netherlands (8%) and China (7%) (fig. 2, table 3).

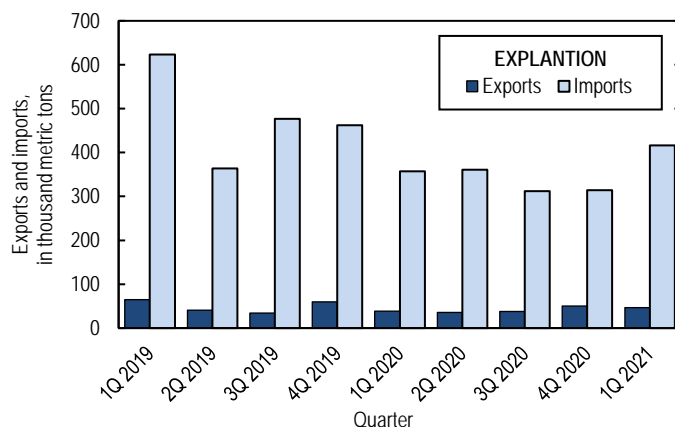


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the first quarter of 2019 through the first quarter of 2021. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

On April 26, Xinfu Group Ltd. restarted production of 1.4 million metric tons per year (Mt/yr) at its alumina refinery in Jiaokou, Shanxi Province, China. The 2.8-Mt/yr refinery was ordered to shut down on May 19, 2019 after a spill from a red mud disposal area (Li, 2021). Kaiman Aluminum Co. shut down about one-half of the capacity of its 2.1 Mt/yr alumina refinery in Sanmenxia, Henan Province, China, at the end of April. A shortage of bauxite from nearby mines attributed to environmental protection actions was cited for the shutdown. East Hope Aluminum Co. Ltd. completed maintenance at its 2.4-Mt/yr alumina refinery in Sanmenxia, Henan Province, China, and resumed production at full capacity at the end of April (Tang, 2021).

United Company RUSAL Plc started bauxite production from a new pit at the Vezhayu-Vorykvinskoye deposit, part of the Timan Mine in the Komi Republic, Russia. RUSAL reported the new pit area had more than 14 million metric tons (Mt) of bauxite ore reserves. Construction continued on another pit area of the that was scheduled to

start production in 2023. The new pits would replace production from two other pits whose reserves were expected to be depleted by 2022. The mine produced 3.3 Mt of bauxite in 2020 but the capacity of the new pit was not available (Bouckley, 2021; United Company RUSAL Plc, 2021).

References Cited

- Bouckley, Ekaterina, 2021, Russian aluminum producer Rusal extends life of mine at Komi enterprise: S&P Global Platts Metals Daily, v. 10, no. 80, April 26, p. 4–5.
- Li, Hui, 2021, Alumina market wary over China-Australia tensions: Fastmarkets-AMM, v. 129, no. 19–1, May 10, p. 14.
- Tang, Lucy, 2021, China's March alumina output up 11% on year amid higher smelter demand: S&P Global Platts Metals Daily, v. 10, no. 80, April 26, p.

4.

United Company RUSAL Plc, 2021, RUSAL commissions a new open pit mine in the Komi Republic with reserves of over 14 million tonnes of bauxite: Moscow, Russia, United Company RUSAL Plc press release, April 26. (Accessed May 14, 2021, at <https://rusal.ru/en/press-center/press-releases/rusal-commissions-a-new-open-pit-mine-in-the-komi-republic-with-reserves-of-over-14-million-tonnes-o/>.)

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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	2020				1st quarter–	2021
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter
Imports for consumption:						
Brazil	--	--	--	191	191	53
Guinea	104,000	--	--	--	104,000	--
Jamaica ²	554,000	666,000	728,000	728,000	2,680,000	639,000
Sierra Leone	116,000	134,000	--	49,000	298,000	--
Turkey	--	35,000	60,700	--	95,700	56,500
Other	729	--	261	--	990	--
Total	775,000	834,000	789,000	777,000	3,180,000	695,000
Exports:						
Canada	652	222	332	351	1,560	284
Other	403	293	84	190	970	124
Total	1,060	515	416	541	2,530	408

--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	2020										2021	
	1st quarter		2d quarter		3d quarter		4th quarter		1st quarter– 4th quarter		1st quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports for consumption:												
Australia	--	49,700	--	49,500	--	--	--	49,500	--	149,000	--	--
Brazil	--	--	--	--	--	--	226	--	226	--	1,780	--
China	15,100	89	5,820	3,050	3,780	2,120	9,690	61	34,400	5,320	14,200	5,580
Guyana	5,440	51,300	7,250	13,900	11,300	17,100	6,330	33,200	30,300	115,000	13,000	45,100
Other	366	6	360	74	304	29	190 ^r	64	1,220 ^r	173	133	9,550
Total	20,900	101,000	13,400	66,500	15,400	19,200	16,400	82,800	66,200	270,000	29,000	60,200
Exports:												
Canada	1,260	--	656	--	535	--	260	--	2,710	--	54	--
China	241	--	503	--	680	--	742	5	2,170	5	630	--
Mexico	246	--	897	--	453	3	123	--	1,720	3	181	--
Other	308	--	235	40	131	--	195	--	869	40	136	39
Total	2,050	--	2,290	40	1,800	3	1,320	5	7,460	48	1,000	39

^rRevised. --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	2020				1st quarter– 4th quarter	2021 1st quarter
	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter		
Imports for consumption: ²						
Australia	48,700	49,400	1	--	98,100	66,500
Brazil	233,000	197,000	229,000	239,000	899,000	220,000
Canada	17,100	13,600	13,800	15,200	59,700	16,000
Jamaica ³	33,800	71,000	38,100	38,400	181,000	77,500
Other	24,500	29,400	30,500	21,000	105,000	35,900
Total	357,000	361,000	312,000	314,000	1,340,000	416,000
Exports: ⁴						
Canada	8,290	4,720	5,080	5,650	23,700	6,430
China	1,870	1,750	1,800	1,640	7,070	3,250
Mexico	10,700	13,700	16,500	19,300	60,200	15,900
Netherlands	1,480	1,080	655	10,500	13,700	3,510
Other	16,100	14,600	13,700	13,400	57,700	17,600
Total	38,500	35,900	37,700	50,400	162,000	46,800

-- 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: 343,569 metric tons (t) in 2020; 88,878 t in the first quarter of 2021.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 111,133 t in 2020; 33,863 t in the first quarter of 2021.

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