

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 SECOND QUARTER 2021

Imports of crude and dried bauxite in the second quarter of 2021 were 734,000 metric tons (t), 6% more than those in the first quarter of 2021, 12% less than those in the second quarter of 2020, and 29% less than those in the second quarter of 2019. Jamaica (86%) and Turkey (10%) were the leading sources of crude and dried bauxite imports in the second quarter of 2021 (fig. 1, table 1).

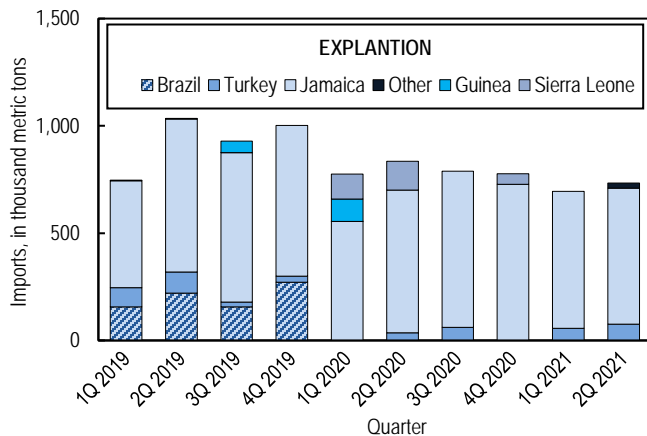


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of crude and dried bauxite from the second quarter of 2019 through the second quarter of 2021. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Imports of alumina during the second quarter of 2021 were 383,000 t, 8% less than those in the first quarter of 2021, 6% more than those in the second quarter of 2020, and 4% more than those in the second quarter of 2019. The leading sources of imported alumina in the second quarter of 2021 were Brazil (66%) and Jamaica (23%) (fig. 2, table 3).

Exports of alumina during the second quarter of 2021 were 48,800 t, 4% more than those in the first quarter of 2020, 36% more than those in the second quarter of 2020, and 20% more than those in the second quarter of 2019. The leading destinations for alumina exported in the second quarter of 2021 were Mexico (35%), Canada (15%), and China (8%) (fig. 2, table 3).

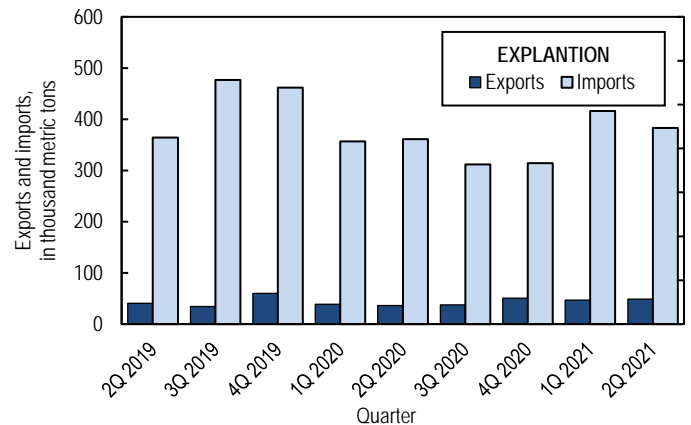


Figure 2. Alumina exports and imports from the second quarter of 2019 through the second quarter of 2021. Sources: Jamaica Bauxite Institute and U.S. Census Bureau.

Update

The Alumar alumina refinery in Brazil temporarily shut down about one-third of its 3.5 million-metric-ton-per-year (Mt/yr) capacity on July 19, citing damage to equipment used to unload bauxite from ships. A restart date was not announced. The refinery was joint venture among Alcoa Inc. (54%), South32 Ltd. (36%), and Rio Tinto plc (10%) (Ribeiro, 2021).

Flooding in Henan Province, China was cited for several alumina refineries temporarily shutting down production during the last two weeks of July. Service on several railroads in the province was disrupted, interfering with alumina shipments from the refineries and shipments of bauxite and caustic soda to the refineries. Among the refineries that stopped production was Aluminum Corp. of China's (Chinalco) 1-Mt/yr refinery at Luoyang. Production at all refineries affected was expected to restart by mid-August. Alumina prices in China were reported to have increased slightly the week after flooding. On July 10, Chinalco temporarily shut down production from 500,000 metric tons per year of capacity at the 2.5-Mt/yr alumina refinery in Shanxi Province. A shortage of bauxite was cited for

the shutdown. The refinery had been producing at a rate of 1.7 Mt/yr since the start of 2021 because of bauxite shortages. Plans to restart capacity were not available but it was expected that a restart will not happen until after yearend. Environmental and safety audits in Shanxi Province were cited for decreased production of bauxite and alumina in July and August (Li, 2021 a, b, c; Lim and Ong, 2021a).

PT Bintan Alumina Indonesia started trial production from its 1-Mt/yr alumina refinery in Riau Island Province, Indonesia and shipped its first cargo in July. Rampup of the refinery to full capacity is planned for February 2022. The 18,000 t cargo was shipped to one of Press Metal Aluminum Berhad's smelters in Malaysia. The refinery was a joint venture among Global Aluminum International Pte Ltd. (72%), Press Metal (25%), and PT Mahkota Karya Utama (3%) (Lim and Ong, 2021b).

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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	2021		
		1st quarter	2d quarter	1st quarter– 2d quarter
Imports for consumption:				
Brazil	191	105 ^r	157	262
Guinea	104,000	--	--	--
Jamaica ²	2,680,000	639,000	633,000	1,270,000
Sierra Leone	298,000	--	--	--
Turkey	95,700	56,500	75,500	132,000
Other	990	--	25,200	25,200
Total	3,180,000	695,000	734,000	1,430,000
Exports:				
Canada	1,560	284	298	582
Other	970	124	72	196
Total	2,530	408	370	778

^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	2021							
	2020		1st quarter		2d quarter		1st quarter– 2d quarter	
	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other	Refrac- tory	Other
Imports for consumption:								
Australia	--	149,000	--	--	--	49,500	--	49,500
Brazil	226	--	1,780	--	--	--	1,780	--
China	34,400	5,310 ^r	14,200	5,580	13,500	1,440	27,700	7,020
Guyana	30,300	115,000	13,000	45,100	14,900	30,500	27,900	75,600
Other	1,220	173	133	9,550	204	10,000	337	19,600
Total	66,200	270,000	29,000	60,200	28,700	91,500	57,700	152,000
Exports:								
Canada	2,710	--	54	--	20	--	74	--
China	2,170	5	630	--	428	--	1,060	--
Mexico	1,720	3	181	--	1,560	--	1,740	--
Other	869	40	136	39	220	351	356	390
Total	7,460	48	1,000	39	2,230	351	3,230	390

^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	2021		
		1st quarter	2d quarter	1st quarter– 2d quarter
Imports for consumption:²				
Australia	98,100	66,500	32	66,500
Brazil	899,000	220,000	252,000	472,000
Canada	59,700	16,000	16,600	32,500
Jamaica ³	181,000	77,500	87,400	165,000
Other	105,000	35,900	26,800	62,800
Total	1,340,000	416,000	383,000	799,000
Exports:⁴				
Belgium	6,330	1,980	3,210	5,190
Canada	23,800 ^r	6,430	7,260	13,700
China	7,020 ^r	3,250	4,010	7,260
Mexico	60,200	15,900	17,300	33,200
Netherlands	3,820 ^r	3,510	893	4,400
Other	51,500 ^r	15,700 ^r	16,200	31,900
Total	153,000 ^r	46,800	48,800	95,600

^rRevised.

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: 344,000 (revised) metric tons (t) in 2020; 88,900 (revised) t in the first quarter of 2021; 78,800 t in the second quarter of 2021.

³Source: Jamaica Bauxite Institute.

⁴Includes exports of aluminum hydroxide reported in calcined equivalent. As shipped, aluminum hydroxide: 111,000 (revised) t in 2020; 33,900 (revised) t in the first quarter of 2021; 35,700 t in the second quarter of 2021.

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