USGS
science for a changing world

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:
David E. Guberman, Lead Commodity Specialist
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-4977, Fax: (703) 648-7757
E-mail: dguberman@usgs.gov

Elsie D. Isaac (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7950
Fax: (703) 648-7975
E-mail: eisaac@usgs.gov

Internet: http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals

LEAD IN MARCH 2008

Domestic mine production (recoverable) of lead in March was 36,100 metric tons (t), according to data compiled by the U.S. Geological Survey. Average daily mine production in March was 1,160 t, about 8% lower than that in February. Year-to-date mine production through March 2008 was around 3% higher than that of the same period of 2007. Secondary refinery production of lead increased about 4% compared with that of the previous month.

According to Platts Metals Week, the average North American producer price for lead in March was $1.47 per pound, essentially unchanged from that of the previous month. The London Metal Exchange cash price in March averaged $3,007 per metric ton, down about 2% from that of the previous month.

Northstar Battery Co. (Springfield, MO) announced that it had begun construction of a new $73 million manufacturing facility in Missouri. The new plant was to be nearly double the size of its current facility and operational by April 2009. Northstar manufactured lead-acid industrial batteries that were used to provide standby power for the telecommunications industry. The company was also planning to expand its global distribution network as part of an effort to target the telecommunications infrastructure markets in China, India, and South Africa (CRU Lead Monitor, 2008).

India's leading producer of lead acid batteries, Exide Industries Ltd. (Kolkata), announced that it was increasing the prices of its batteries by 5%. Exide manufactured a wide range of industrial, motive, and standby power lead-acid batteries. According to the company, higher lead prices were the driving force behind the price change. Exide had been importing the majority of the 100,000 metric tons per year of lead used to manufacture its batteries, and imported lead scrap had been subject to a 26% duty in India. The company had been trying to build up its secondary lead smelting capabilities in India to control costs and reduce its reliance on imported lead (American Metal Market, 2008).

In Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China, Shenzhen Zhongjin Lingnan Nonfemet Co., Ltd., (NONFEMET) announced that it planned to raise its output of refined lead and zinc by 35% to 370,000 t in 2008. The company owned and operated the Shaoguan smelter, which produced 92,200 t of electrolytic lead in 2007. NONFEMET also expected to increase its output of lead and zinc concentrate to 165,000 t in 2008, a 13% increase from that of the previous year (Beijing Antaike Information Development Co., Ltd., 2008).

References Cited

American Metal Market, 2008, India's Exide to raise battery prices by 5%: American Metal Market, March 4. (Accessed July 22, 2008, via http://amm.com/2008-03-04__21-52-00.html.)

Beijing Antaike Information Development Co., Ltd., 2008, Zhongjin Lingnan plans to raise lead and zinc output by 35% in 2008: China Metal Market—Lead, Zinc & Tin Monthly, no. 136, April, p. 8.

CRU Lead Monitor, 2008, Consumption trends: CRU Lead Monitor, April, p. 10.

TABLE 1
SALIENT LEAD STATISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES[1]

(Metric tons, lead content, unless otherwise specified)

	2007		2008		
	Year	January-March	February	March	January-March
Production:					
Mine (recoverable)	434,000	108,000	36,900	36,100	111,000
Secondary refinery:					
Reported by smelters/refineries	1,170,000	288,000	95,900	99,900	298,000
Estimated	11,700	2,900	959	999	2,980
Recovered from copper-base scrap[e]	15,000	3,750	1,250	1,250	3,750
Total secondary	1,200,000	294,000	98,200	102,000	305,000
Stocks, end of period:					
Secondary smelters and consumers	63,100	49,000	50,800 [r]	53,600	53,600
Imports for consumption:					
Base bullion	1,990	494	118	176	314
Refined metal	264,000	58,900	26,100	28,300	78,800
Consumption:					
Reported	1,500,000	374,000	132,000 [r]	126,000	394,000
Undistributed[e]	45,100	11,700	3,950 [r]	3,790	11,800
Total	1,550,000	386,000	136,000 [r]	130,000	406,000
Exports:					
Ore and concentrate	300,000	7,340	7,960	5,500	23,600
Bullion	170	34	19	35	70
Wrought and unwrought lead	56,400	6,810	7,260	4,560	17,600
TEL/TML preparations, based on lead compounds	2,740	2,210	197	355	802
Exports (gross weight): Scrap	129,000	15,300	23,800	19,100	57,100
Platts Metals Week North American producer price (cents per pound)	123.84	89.21	146.88	146.60	147.84

[e]Estimated. [r]Revised.
[1]Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices; may not add to totals shown.

TABLE 2
MONTHLY AVERAGE LEAD PRICES

	North American producer price	LME		Sterling exchange rate
	cents/lb	$/metric ton	£/metric ton	dollars/£
2007:				
March	93.82	1,913.11	982.38	1.947427
December	160.63	2,595.28	1,287.31	2.016050
Year	123.84	2,579.02	1,288.41	2.001715
2008:				
January	150.03	2,606.85	1,323.11	1.970238
February	146.88	3,078.82	1,567.15	1.964600
March	146.60	3,007.29	1,502.54	2.001467

Source: Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 3
CONSUMPTION OF PURCHASED LEAD-BASE SCRAP[1]

(Metric tons, gross weight)

Item	Stocks February 29, 2008	Net receipts	Consumption	Stocks March 31, 2008
Battery-lead	21,700	101,000	103,000	19,700
Soft lead	W	W	W	W
Drosses and residues	W	W	W	W
Other[2]	997	7,170	7,210	955
Total	22,700	108,000	110,000	20,600
Percent change from preceding month	XX	+4.6	+1.4	-9.2

W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other." XX Not applicable.

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

[2]Includes solder, common babbitt, antimonial lead, cable covering, type metals, and other lead-base scrap.

TABLE 4
LEAD, TIN, AND ANTIMONY RECOVERED FROM
LEAD-BASE SCRAP IN MARCH 2008[1]

(Metric tons)

Product recovered	Secondary metal content		
	Lead	Tin	Antimony
Soft and calcium lead	51,900	--	--
Remelt lead	W	--	--
Antimonial lead	11,300	(2)	(2)
Other[3]	36,700	(2)	(2)
Total lead-base	99,900	141	312

W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included in "Other."
-- Zero.

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

[2]Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included in "Total."

[3]Includes cable lead, lead-base babbitt, solder, type metals, and other products.

TABLE 5
CONSUMPTION OF LEAD IN THE UNITED STATES[1]

(Metric tons, lead content)

Use	2007		2008		
	January-December	January-March	February	March	January-March
Metal products:					
Ammunition, shot and bullets	75,400	21,000	6,200	6,240	18,800
Brass and bronze, billet and ingots	3,190	880	323	323	997
Cable covering, power and communication and calking lead, building construction	8,020	2,650	567	626	1,870
Casting metals	29,900	4,880	2,640	2,640	7,920
Sheet lead, pipes, traps and other extruded products	29,700	10,700	2,310	2,480	7,050
Solder	7,000	1,950	587	587	1,760
Storage batteries, including oxides	1,300,000	321,000	116,000 r	110,000	346,000
Terne metal, type metal, and other metal products[2]	16,700	442	1,310 r	1,310	4,020
Total metal products	1,470,000	363,000	130,000 r	125,000	388,000
Other oxides and miscellaneous	28,000	11,300	1,970 r	1,960	5,920
Total reported	1,500,000	374,000	132,000 r	126,000	394,000
Undistributed[e]	45,100	11,700	3,950 r	3,790	11,800
Grand total	1,550,000	386,000	136,000 r	130,000	406,000

[e]Estimated. [r]Revised.

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

[2]Includes lead consumed in foil, collapsible tubes, annealing, plating, galvanizing, and fishing weights.

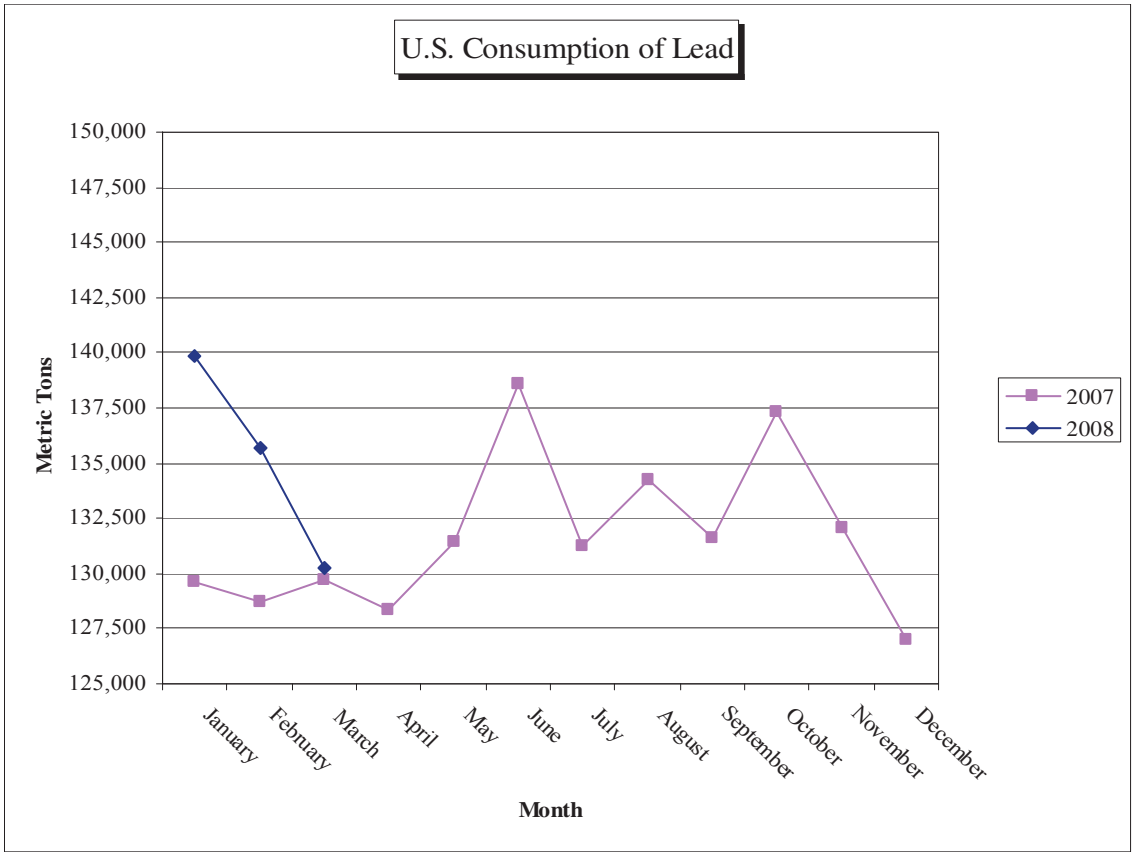

TABLE 6
CONSUMER AND SECONDARY SMELTER STOCKS, RECEIPTS, AND CONSUMPTION OF LEAD[1]

(Metric tons, lead content)

Type of material	Stocks February 29, 2008	Net receipts	Consumption	Stocks March 31, 2008
Soft lead	26,700 r	69,400	69,400	26,700
Antimonial lead	15,000 r	26,900	25,800	16,200
Lead alloys	W	W	W	W
Copper-base scrap	W	W	W	W
Total	50,800 r	129,000	126,000	53,600

rRevised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included in "Total."
[1]Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

TABLE 7
U.S. EXPORTS OF LEAD, BY CLASS[1]

(Metric tons)

	2007		2008		
	March	Year	February	March	January-March
Lead content:					
Ore and concentrates	26,100	300,000	7,960	5,500	23,600
Bullion	--	170	19	35	70
Materials excluding scrap	4,900	56,400	7,260	4,560	17,600
TEL/TML preparations, based on lead compounds	60	2,740	197	355	802
Total	31,000	359,000	15,400	10,400	42,000
Gross weight: Scrap	7,950	129,000	23,800	19,100	57,100

-- Zero.
[1]Data are rounded to more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 8

U.S. IMPORTS OF LEAD BY TYPE OF MATERIALS AND BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN[1]

(Metric tons, lead content)

	General imports					Imports for consumption				
	2007		2008			2007		2008		
Country of origin	Year	January-March	February	March	January-March	Year	January-March	February	March	January-March
Ore, matte, etc.:										
Canada	--	--	41	--	41	--	--	41	--	41
Mexico	--	--	--	--	7	--	--	--	--	7
Total	--	--	41	--	49	--	--	41	--	49
Base bullion:										
Colombia	1,860	494	98	39	157	1,860	494	98	39	157
Mexico	--	--	--	137	137	--	--	--	137	137
Other	127	-- [r]	20	--	20	127	-- [r]	20	--	20
Total	1,990	494	118	176	314	1,990	494	118	176	314
Pigs and bars:										
Canada	208,000	48,800	20,900	21,700	62,400	208,000	48,800	20,900	21,700	62,400
Mexico	35,600	4,860	3,550	4,950	11,600	35,600	4,860	3,550	4,950	11,600
Peru	16,500	5,080	1,490	494	2,640	16,500	5,080	1,490	494	2,640
Other	3,860	158	150	1,170	2,060	3,860	158	150	1,170	2,060
Total	264,000	58,900	26,100	28,300	78,800	264,000	58,900	26,100	28,300	78,800
Grand total	266,000	59,400	26,300	28,400	79,100	266,000	59,400	26,300	28,400	79,100

[r]Revised. -- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.