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Mineral Industry Surveys

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TIN IN APRIL 2007

Domestic consumption of primary tin in April was estimated to be 3% below that in March 2007 and 2% below that in April 2006. Consumption of primary tin for the first 4 months of 2007 was 8% lower than that in the comparable period of 2006. For the first 4 months of 2007, solder remained the leading consumption category, followed by chemicals, tinplate, and brass and bronze.

The Platts Metals Week average composite price for tin in April 2007 was $8.74 per pound, 2% above that for March 2007, and 53% above that in April 2006.

The U.S. Justice Department (DOJ) issued a directive that Mittal Steel Co. NV (Rotterdam, Netherlands) must sell its Sparrows Point, MD, steel plant, in order to remedy what it called “competitive harm” arising from Mittal’s $33 billion merger with Arcelor SA (Luxembourg, Luxembourg). Earlier the DOJ had specified that the combination of Mittal and Arcelor, as originally proposed, would have substantially lessened competition in the United States market for tin mill products. The ruling specified that Mittal had to divest a steel plant that produced tin mill products in the eastern United States. That, in effect, meant that it could sell either its Weirton, WV, plant or its Sparrows Point facility, both of which are part of Mittal (American Metal Market, 2007).

Malaysia Smelting Corp., Bhd (MSC) (Penang, Malaysia) announced that it expected to experience a decline in its 2007 refined tin output despite the grant of a tin export license for its Indonesian subsidiary, PT Koba Tin. MSC officials attributed the lower expected output to lower production at its Butterworth smelter in Malaysia and at Koba Tin. The firm’s 75%-owned subsidiary, Koba Tin, was given an export license by the Ministry of Trade in Jakarta, Indonesia, effective April 18, 2007. Koba Tin has two sources of tin concentrate—one through its own dredging and gravel pump operations and the other from independent small-scale Indonesian miners. Koba Tin’s own dredging and pump operations only produce an average of 500 to 600 metric tons per month (t/mo) of tin, while its smelter output capacity is 2,000 t/mo. MSC’s Butterworth smelter was expected to lower output in 2007 because its feedstock from Indonesia has been affected with the ban on tin exports by the Indonesian Government and the closure of 23 private tin smelters on Bangka Island owing to improper licensing in late 2006. The Butterworth smelter has a designed capacity of 50,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) and has been producing at a rate of 30,000 to 40,000 t/yr (Platts Metals Week, 2007).

Congo (Kinshasa), Africa’s major tin producer, halted all exports of tin concentrates. The exports from North Kivu were halted April 15, while shipments from South Kivu were stopped April 17. The Deputy Mines Minister observed that Congo (Kinshasa)’s mining laws require miners, dealers, and exporters to have a permit to handle raw materials, but no permits have been issued in the two provinces. Congo (Kinshasa)’s tin mine production has been about 7,000 to 8,000 t/yr of tin-in-concentrate (CRU International Ltd., 2007c).

Kasbah Resources Limited (South Perth, Western Australia, Australia) announced plans to raise $8 million to fund feasibility studies on its two tin projects, Achmmach and El Karit, located in the Middle Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Drill results carried out in 2006 established an inferred mineral resource at Achmmach of 2 million metric tons of tin with a grade of 1% tin. Kasbah aims to undertake a feasibility study and move these two projects toward an advanced exploration/development decision within 12 to 18 months (CRU International Ltd., 2007b).

Singapore Tin Industries (STI) announced that it plans to buy scrap tin in an attempt to boost its output. A company official noted that the recycling business has become very attractive because of high tin prices. STI plans to open two tin collecting centers in Germany and Japan to collect scrap tin and bring it to Singapore. STI expects to increase its refined tin production to around 25,000 metric tons (t) in 2007, up from an initial target of 18,000 t. STI indicated that it would still source around 18,000 t of primary tin ingots from abroad, with an additional supply to come from recycling. The company plans to become a major producer of tin and eventually produce 36,000 t of tin annually (CRU International Ltd., 2007a).

Update

On December 7, 2007, the Platts Metals Week composite price for tin was $10.18 per pound.

References Cited

American Metal Market, 2007, US orders Mittal Steel to sell Sparrows Point mill: American Metal Market, v. 115, no. 7, February 21, p. 1, 4.

CRU International Ltd., 2007a, CRU Week in the News: CRU International Ltd., March 8. (Accessed March 8, 2007, via http://www.crumonitor.com.)

CRU International Ltd., 2007b, CRU Week in the News: CRU International Ltd., April 5. (Accessed April 5, 2007, via http://www.crumonitor.com.)

CRU International Ltd., 2007c, CRU Week in the News: CRU International Ltd., April 27. (Accessed April 27, 2007, via http://www.crumonitor.com.)

Platts Metals Week, 2007, MSC sees 2007 output limited by feed stock: Platts Metals Week, v. 78, no. 17, April 23, p. 15.

TABLE 1
SALIENT TIN STATISTICS[1]

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

	2006[p] January-December	2007 March	2007 April	2007 January-April
Production, secondary[e, 2]	10,800	900	900	3,600
Consumption:				
Primary	33,200	2,790 [r]	2,700	10,100
Secondary	8,370	811 [r]	665	3,600
Imports for consumption, metal	43,300	2,080	2,000	10,900
Exports, metal	5,490	758	369	2,070
Stocks at end of period	5,700	6,030	6,030	XX
Prices (average cents per pound):[3]				
Metals Week composite[4]	565.11	858.90 [r]	873.71	XX
Metals Week New York dealer	329.69	649.08	656.06	XX
London, standard grade, cash	304.00	630.00	637.00	XX
Kuala Lumpur	301.83	625.81	641.76	XX

[e]Estimated. [p]Preliminary. [r]Revised. XX Not applicable.

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

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

[3]Source: Platts Metals Week.

[4]The 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 other tin prices.

TABLE 2
METALS WEEK COMPOSITE PRICE[1]

(Cents per pound)

Period	High	Low	Average
2006:			
December	748.50	676.50	699.98
Year	589.35	526.32	565.11
2007:			
January	773.61	655.02	712.88
February	869.47	744.44	800.69
March	899.99	827.03	858.90
April	909.65	840.72	873.71

[1]The 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 STATES[1]

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Period	Tinplate waste (waste, strips, cobbles, etc.) (gross weight)	Tinplate (all forms) Gross weight	Tin content	Tin per metric ton of plate (kilograms)	Shipments[2]
2006[p]	56,420	2,130,000	6,808	3.2	168,000
2007:					
January	2,918	157,000	508	3.5	150,000
February	2,918	133,333	508	3.9	126,540
March	2,624 [r]	136,349 [r]	564 [r]	4.1 [r]	143,395
April	2,317	176,176	548	3.1	143,573

[p]Preliminary. [r]Revised.

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

[2]Source: American Iron and Steel Institute monthly publication.

U.S. TIN IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS[1]

(Metric tons)

Country or product	2006	2007 March	April	January-April
Imports:				
Metal (unwrought tin):				
Bolivia	8,157	747	40	1,467
Brazil	1,303	246	225	1,343
Chile	20	--	--	--
China	4,439	458	405	1,271
Hong Kong	99	--	--	--
Indonesia	4,600	40	20	560
Malaysia	245	--	2	14
Netherlands	--	100	--	100
Peru	21,622	285	888	5,036
Singapore	1,089	195	413	608
Thailand	210	--	--	--
United Kingdom	1,373	--	--	480
Other	139	5	2	43
Total	43,296	2,076	1,995	10,923
Other (gross weight):				
Alloys	6,275	182	207	670
Bars and rods	2,742	341	312	1247
Foil, tubes, pipes	39	--	--	--
Plates, sheets, strip	287	--	--	--
Waste and scrap	2,485	178	236	727
Miscellaneous	3,456	254	572	1343
Total	15,284	904	1,327	3,987
Exports (metal)	5,490	758	369	2,073

-- Zero.

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5

CONSUMPTION OF TIN IN THE UNITED STATES, BY FINISHED PRODUCT[1]

(Metric tons of contained tin)

Product	2006 January-December p	2007 March Primary	2007 March Secondary	2007 March Total	2007 April Primary	2007 April Secondary	2007 April Total	2007 January-April
Alloys (miscellaneous)[2]	1,920	145 r	--	145 r	143	--	143	604
Babbitt	287	18	3	21	W	3	3	75
Bar tin and anodes	316	25	--	25 r	23	--	23	101
Bronze and brass	2,910	110	137	247 r	W	117	117	901
Chemicals	7,440	755	W	755 r	754	W	754	2,760
Collapsible tubes and foil	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
Solder	10,200	510	W	510 r	401	W	401	3,100
Tinning	444	27	--	27 r	29	--	29	137
Tinplate[3]	6,810	564	W	564	548	W	548	2,250
Tin powder	231	W	W	W	W	(4)	W	W
White metal[5]	26	W	--	W	W	--	W	W
Other	207	32 r	371	403 r	198	245	444	137
Total reported	30,800	2,190 r	511	2,700 r	2,100	365	2,460	10,100
Estimated undistributed consumption[6]	10,800	600	300	900	600	300	900	3,600
Grand total	41,600	2,790 r	811	3,600 r	2,700	665	3,360	13,700

p Preliminary. r Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other." -- Zero.

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

[2] Includes terne metal.

[3] Includes secondary pig tin and tin components of tinplating chemical solutions.

[4] Less then 1/2 unit.

[5] Includes pewter, britannia metal, and jewelers' metal.

[6] Estimated consumption of plants reporting on an annual basis.