

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## SODA ASH IN FEBRUARY 2009

U.S. natural soda ash production in February was 670,000 metric tons (t), 17% lower than the previous month's production of 806,000 t, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The February 2009 production total was the lowest since January 1988 when production was 654,000 t. The downturn in production was because of the depressed condition affecting domestic and export sales.

Ending inventories of soda ash for February 2009 were 273,000 t, 6% higher than the preceding month's inventories. Wyoming trona production in February was 2 million metric tons. Total production of chemical caustic soda was withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

Apparent consumption of soda ash in January 2009 was 384,000 t, 27% lower than that of January 2008, and ending stocks were 17% higher.

Exports and imports of soda ash in January 2008 were 423,000 t and 169 t, respectively.

The trends in soda ash statistics for January 2009, compared with those of January 2008, were as follows: production was 13% lower; imports were 91% lower; exports were 9% higher; and apparent consumption, 27% lower. Imports have dropped dramatically in 2009 compared with those of 2008 because of reduced domestic consumption of soda ash.

All percentages in this report were computed using unrounded data.

Also included in this report is Table 5 that shows reported consumption of U.S. soda ash by end use in 2008.

**Note:**

The final annual average value for soda ash sales in 2008 was \$122.11 per short ton.

TABLE 1  
SALIENT SODA ASH STATISTICS<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Soda ash		Wyoming trona production
	Production <sup>2</sup>	Ending stocks	
2008:			
January	922	221	1,510
February	878	190	1,370
March	955	194	1,510
April	890	164	1,530
May	987	210	1,490
June	935	211	1,480
July	912	169	1,200
August	976	222	1,630
September	935	265	1,490
October	996	247	1,560
November	965	262	1,530
December	917	259	1,510
January-December	11,300	XX	17,800
2009:			
January	806	258	1,160
February	670	273	2,020
January-February	1,480	XX	3,180

XX Not applicable.

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

<sup>2</sup>Production data include soda ash equivalent from soda liquors only. Soda ash equivalent from mine water is not included. Soda liquors are withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

TABLE 2  
U.S. EXPORTS OF SODA ASH BY COUNTRY, IN 2009<sup>1,2</sup>

(Metric tons)

Country	January			Total quantity	% of total	Total value
	Quantity	Value <sup>3</sup>	Unit Value			
Australia	7,000	\$1,300	\$185	7,000	2	\$1,300
Belgium	47,600	8,930	188	47,600	11	8,930
Brazil	50,200	10,500	210	50,200	12	10,500
Canada	21,800	3,930	180	21,800	5	3,930
Chile	19,800	4,310	218	19,800	5	4,310
Colombia	19,500	4,040	207	19,500	5	4,040
Costa Rica	4,500	1,080	240	4,500	1	1,080
Dominican Republic	1,980	594	300	1,980	(4)	594
France	15,000	2,480	165	15,000	4	2,480
Indonesia	9,600	2,080	217	9,600	2	2,080
Japan	6,000	638	106	6,000	1	638
Korea, Republic of	16,000	3,550	222	16,000	4	3,550
Mexico	57,000	12,200	214	57,000	13	12,200
Netherlands	23,800	4,430	186	23,800	6	4,430
Panama	2,110	632	299	2,110	(4)	632
Peru	8,550	1,870	218	8,550	2	1,870
Philippines	5,000	676	135	5,000	1	676
Portugal	13,500	1,420	105	13,500	3	1,420
Saudi Arabia	17,500	2,300	132	17,500	4	2,300
South Africa	22,500	5,060	225	22,500	5	5,060
Spain	28,200	4,660	165	28,200	7	4,660
Taiwan	14,500	1,780	123	14,500	3	1,780
United Arab Emirates	7,520	990	132	7,520	2	990
Venezuela	4,000	1,020	256	4,000	1	1,020
Total	423,000	80,500	190	423,000	100	80,500

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

<sup>2</sup>February 2009 data were not available at time of publication.

<sup>3</sup>Free alongside ship values at U.S. ports.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census

TABLE 3  
U.S. IMPORTS OF SODA ASH<sup>1,2</sup>

Period	Quantity (metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousands)
2008:		
January	1,870	\$326
February	774	203
March	1,210	222
April	895	204
May	906	308
June	1,130	360
July	632	214
August	1,070	407
September	658	282
October	1,410	530
November	615	211
December	1,730	553
January-December	12,900	3,820
2009, January	169	108

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

<sup>2</sup>February 2009 data were not available at time of publication.

<sup>3</sup>Cost, insurance, and freight value at U.S. ports.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4  
U.S. APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons)

Period	Production	Imports	Exports	Net stock		Apparent consumption <sup>2</sup>
				Increase	Decrease	
2008:						
January	922,000	1,870	387,000	14,500	--	523,000
February	878,000	774	513,000	--	30,100	396,000
March	955,000	1,210	429,000	3,820	--	524,000
April	890,000	895	430,000	--	30,300	492,000
May	987,000	906	383,000	45,600	--	559,000
June	935,000	1,130	531,000	1,550	--	405,000
July	912,000	632	417,000	--	41,900	538,000
August	976,000	1,070	414,000	52,600	--	511,000
September	935,000	658	417,000	43,200	--	475,000
October	996,000	1,410	468,000	--	18,000	547,000
November	965,000	615	525,000	15,000	--	426,000
December	917,000	1,730	455,000	--	2,750	466,000
January-December	11,300,000	12,900	5,370,000	53,200	--	5,860,000
2009:						
January	806,000	169	423,000	--	1,160	384,000
February	670,000	NA	NA	14,900	--	NA

NA Not available. -- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Production plus imports minus exports plus or minus stock changes.

TABLE 5  
REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF SODA ASH IN THE UNITED STATES, BY END USE, BY QUARTER<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

NAICS <sup>2</sup> code	End use	2007	2008				Total
			First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	
3272	Glass:						
327213	Container	1,460	360	378	353	315	1,410
327211	Flat	1,080	253	250	252	264	1,020
327993	Fiber	210	49	45	47	45	186
327212	Other	154	40	33	39	25	137
	Total	2,900	702	705	692	649	2,750
32518	Chemicals	1,760	417	406	437	418	1,680
325611	Soaps and detergents	463	139	118	137	151	545
322	Pulp and paper	91	24	21	23	24	92
221310	Water treatment <sup>3</sup>	98	21	23	22	22	88
56221	Flue gas desulfurization	130	30	30	39	32	131
422	Distributors	297	59	64	64	66	253
	Other	202	47	53	48	44	192
	Total domestic consumption <sup>4</sup>	5,940	1,440	1,420	1,460	1,410	5,730
	Exports <sup>5</sup>	5,250	1,250	1,280	1,250	1,440	5,220
	Canada	406	94	85	82	68	330
	Total industry sales <sup>6</sup>	11,200	2,690	2,700	2,710	2,840	10,900
	Total sales from plants	11,200	2,770	2,800	2,760	2,870	11,200
	Total production	11,100	2,760	2,810	2,820	2,880	11,300

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

<sup>2</sup>North American Industrial Classification System.

<sup>3</sup>Includes soda ash equivalent from soda liquors and purge liquors sold to powerplant for water treatment. Sales of mine water are excluded.

<sup>4</sup>Imports reported by the producer/importer have been distributed into appropriate end-use categories listed above.

<sup>5</sup>As reported by producers; includes Canada. Data may not necessarily agree with those reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for the same periods.

<sup>6</sup>Represents soda ash from domestic origin (production and inventory changes) and imports and exports. Includes soda ash sold by coproducers and distributed by purchasers into appropriate end-use categories.