



German Steel Sector Expects Higher 2015 Output



As ThyssenKrupp and Salzgitter benefit from the weak euro and increasing demand from the auto industry, Germany's steel sector will see growth pick up in coming months, the German Steel Federation said recently.

Despite a two percent drop in production in the first quarter, the association expects annual output from German steel producers to rise by one percent to 43.3 million tons this year, President Hans Juergen Kerkhoff said.

EU steel mills have lost market share in recent years as cheap imports surged from countries such as China. In 2007, German steel producers had a combined output of 48.3 million tons.

TimkenSteel Commissions Jumbo Bloom Vertical Caster



TimkenSteel a leader in customized alloy steel products and services, recently held an open house ceremony to celebrate the commissioning of its jumbo bloom vertical caster, the largest of its kind in the world, at the Faircrest Steel Plant in Canton.

"TimkenSteel's new jumbo bloom vertical caster improves both our efficiency and capacity to serve demand for large bars and seamless mechanical tubing," said Tom Moline, executive vice president of manufacturing. "The product quality that we're achieving with the caster is meeting our highest expectations."

The \$200 million caster makes sections of special bar quality (SBQ) steel that measure up to 18 inches x 24 inches, referred to as "jumbo blooms," which are later rolled into bars and tubes. The first heat from the caster, produced on Oct. 21, 2014, was sold to a

customer – a testament not only to the strength of the new technology, but the skill and expertise of the team operating it. The caster has now produced more than 45,000 tons of steel blooms in over 300 heats. It serves several markets, including industrial, energy, bearing, military and heavy machinery.

"The people who constructed this caster and who operate it today have made this plant the most technologically advanced steel-making operation in North America," Moline said at the ceremony. "TimkenSteel is known for ultra-clean steel that's used in the world's most demanding applications. We're also known for continuously improving our efficiency. Those involved with this project raised the bar once again on both those counts."

About 200 people attended the commissioning ceremony, including Sen. Rob Portman, Rep. Bob Gibbs and Rep. Jim Renacci.

Rising more than 180 feet above ground and descending 90 feet below ground for an overall height of 270 feet, the caster utilizes a vertical design that allows for continuous casting of high-alloy grades. The design provides for uniform steel with better inclusion distribution.

The caster uses an optimized tundish design for industry-leading cleanliness. Its advanced operating technology also includes electromagnetic stirring, dynamic soft reduction, air-mist cooling, and thermal treatment for optimized surface quality.

Faircrest Steel Plant offers the only combination in the world of a jumbo bloom vertical caster and in-line forge press, which together help improve sound centers in large-bar sizes.

SKF Offers New Sensor for Lubricant Reservoirs



SKF recently announced the introduction of the SKF Ultrasonic sensor to improve fill-level monitoring on SKF and Lincoln branded pumps and reservoirs with lubricant capacities in excess of five liters (1,321 US gal). Developed for oil and grease applications, the sensor provides both low-level and full-level messages for optimum operation.

Virtually maintenance free, the SKF Ultrasonic sensor utilizes ultrasonic waves to provide a non-contact measurement of the distance to the lubricant surface. Depending on preset window limits, a distance proportional analog signal is output. The sensor's two color LED indicates operation and the status of the analog output.

Maintaining the appropriate amount of lubricant in the reservoir helps to avoid under-lubrication and possible equipment damage, while preventing overfilling reduces waste and protects the environment. The SKF Ultrasonic sensor also improves the reliability of monitoring the pump function. The new sensor is suitable for mining, rail, heavy industry and food and beverage applications, as well as any industry that uses large lubricant reservoirs.



Sino Steel to Suspend Australian Iron Ore Mine



Sino Steel Midwest Corp recently said that it will suspend iron ore production at its Blue Hills project in Australia - the second mining company to fall victim to low prices in less than a week.

The Blue Hills mine was opened in August 2013 and was originally scheduled to operate for five years, yielding a little over 3 million tonnes of ore, according to the company, known as SMC.

Spot iron ore prices .IO62-CNI=SI have fallen 60 percent over the past year following a massive rise in production, which analysts blame on overestimates of China's appetite for imported ore by majors Vale, Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton

SMC said delays in gaining regulatory clearance to extend the life of its mine for another two years had also contributed to the suspension, which will take effect in mid-May.

"Tough economic conditions and lengthy delays in obtaining environmental approvals for extensions to the Blue Hills operation, had left no alternatives available," it said in a statement emailed to Reuters.

Atlas Iron said recently that it was suspending mining rather than operate at a loss after exhausting all avenues to reduce costs.

SMC was formed in 2008 after Chinese state-owned metals group Sinosteel Corp acquired the assets of Australian iron ore miner Midwest Corp.

SMC and Atlas are among a handful of lower production miners in Australia locked in a fight for survival as iron ore prices sink.

Others under threat because their costs may exceed selling prices include BC Iron Ltd, Fortescue Metals Group, Arrium Ltd and Grange Resources Ltd, according to cost calculations by UBS.

New Technology for Greener Steel



An agreement aiming to trial CSIRO's Dry Slag Granulation (DSG) technology on an industrial scale has been signed between CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, and the Beijing Research Institute of Metallurgical Equipment, MCC Group (MCCE).

The agreement marks the culmination of more than a decade of DSG technology development by CSIRO and industry partners, including worldsteel member companies, Arrium and BlueScope. The work covered initial design and proof of concept stages through to the construction and operation of prototype DSG pilot plants on small, intermediate and large scales.

The technology, which is to be trialed in China, has a threefold advantage: not only does it convert by-product to base products for cement, but it also reduces greenhouse gas emissions from power generation by using waste heat from hot slag and, lastly, it saves water.

The DSG technology that is fitted to the blast furnace includes a spinning disc and granulation chamber that separates molten slag into droplets under centrifugal forces, uses air to quench and solidify the droplets, and extracts a granulated slag product as well as heated air.

The process produces a pea-size 'glassy'

product that is ideal for cement manufacture but has significantly lower associated greenhouse gas emissions than cement produced by conventional methods.

Air at 500-600°C extracted from the DSG process can be used on-site for drying, preheating or steam generation for power. The technology also saves evaporating water for granulation.

In entering the collaboration with MCCE, CSIRO has recognised the R&D reputation of the Beijing-based company and its ability to scale up the technology and introduce it into China - where 50 percent of the world's 300 million tonnes of iron blast furnace slag is produced each year. Under the agreement, MCCE is to scale up and demonstrate the technology at industrial scale and, upon success, commercialise it in China and then potentially worldwide.

Commenting on the new technology, CSIRO Director of the Mineral Resources Flagship, Jonathan Law said: "The benefits each year from full commercialisation and adoption of DSG technology are in the order of 60 million m3 of water, 800 petajoules of heat energy and 60 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. Those savings are equivalent to 14 percent of Australia's energy use and about 10 per cent of its greenhouse gas emissions each year."

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ThyssenKrupp Reorganizes its Materials Services Operations



ThyssenKrupp has reorganized its materials services operations in Germany: Effective April 8, 2015 the activities of ThyssenKrupp MetalServ GmbH, ThyssenKrupp Stahlkontor GmbH and ThyssenKrupp Schulte GmbH are being legally combined under the roof of the new ThyssenKrupp Schulte GmbH. With immediate effect all business activities of the previously separate companies will operate under the name ThyssenKrupp Schulte GmbH.

The merger of the companies is in connection with the Group's Strategic Way Forward and follows the overriding goal of integrating ThyssenKrupp's businesses more closely so as to create sustainable value by working together as a diversified industrial group.

"This organizational realignment is an important step for us as a full-service partner to our customers. We have reduced the number of individual companies and expanded our product portfolio, our nationwide network, and our range of supply-chain and system-component solutions," says Dr. Oliver Tietze, CEO of

ThyssenKrupp Schulte. "By merging the companies we are now even more focused on the ThyssenKrupp brand. Through increased integration we will optimize the performance of the business units and at the same time create synergies within the Materials Services business area and the Group as a whole."

PT Essar Indonesia Posts 22% Growth

PT Essar Indonesia, part of Essar Global Fund and amongst the largest downstream steel facility, has registered 22% growth in its EBIDTA at USD 15.37 million for the year ended 31st March 2015, against an EBIDTA of USD 12.57 million in the previous year. Revenue was USD 252 million, marginally lower compared to last year, due to depreciation in IDR. The Company sells all its products only in the domestic market. Exports are still not feasible as international prices are lower (despite IDR depreciation) compared to the domestic market.

Production for the year ended 31st March 2015 is higher by 2%, at 317,000 tonnes, against 312,000 tonnes in the previous year. The change in product mix towards high value grades has resulted in higher EBIDTA, though production volume is only marginally higher. The capacity utilization with the changed product mix was about 90%.



Commenting on the performance, Mr. Dattatreya Tembhekar, CEO, PT Essar Indonesia said, "Our focus on value added products has enabled us to post a better performance. The performance, when viewed in the context of 18% depreciation of the Indonesian currency vis-a-vis the USD and continued weakness in steel demand, reflects the strength of the company."

NLMK begins Implementation of HPGR Technology



NLMK Group, the largest steel producer in Russia and a leading international steel company, has begun implementation of HPGR technology at its iron ore beneficiation plant at Stoilensky, an open pit iron ore mine. Implementation of this technology, which is new for Russia, enables a 10% increase in the production capacity of each modernized section of the plant.

High pressure grinding rolls (HPGR) are being installed to complement the existing cone crushers and ball grinders. The use of HPGR technology enables reduced consumption of electric energy, water and other materials in the beneficiation process per tonne of output; as well as increasing the fineness of crushed ore, reducing maintenance costs and increasing the volume of processed ore.

During the first stage of the Stoilensky modernization project, four high pressure grinding rolls will be installed at beneficiation plant sections 1 and 4. Modernization of section 1 will be completed in 2015; with section 4 modernization scheduled for completion in Q1 2016. After stage one is complete, the company will review possible implementation of similar equipment at the remaining sections 2 and 3.

This technology, coupled with other capacity upgrade projects and operational efficiency initiatives, will boost Stoilensky's iron ore concentrate production from the current 15 million tonnes per year to 17.2 million tonnes per year by 2017. This increase in captive low cost material will feed the forthcoming 6 million tonnes per year pelletizing plant scheduled for launch in 2016.



Tosyali Toyo Orders High-efficiency Tinning Line from SMS Siemag

Tosyali Toyo Çelik A.Ş. (Tosyali Toyo Steel Co. Inc.), the Turkish-Japanese joint venture between Tosyali Holding and Toyo Kohan, has awarded SMS Siemag the contract for the supply of an electrolytic tinning line. This line will be a key element of the new steel mill for the production of packing materials to be constructed in Osmaniye, southern Turkey. From late 2016, 255,000 tons per year of very thin steel sheet will be coated with a fine layer of tin as corrosion protection. The high-quality tinplate will then be used as packing materials for foodstuffs or aerosols.

Tosyali Toyo has selected SMS Siemag as supplier because the line, consisting of a great number of high-performance plant components, will be supplied from a single source inclusive of the mechanical equipment, process technology and electrical and automation systems. Ancillary units such as the evaporation unit and anode casting equipment will also be provided by SMS Siemag. Besides design and manufacturing, the scope of supply will include erection and commissioning assistance.

Tosyali Toyo has chosen the soluble tin anode technology. SMS Siemag is a leading supplier of this technology and has proven the economic, ecological and process technology-related advantages in several previously built



tinning lines. This, for example, ensures low tin consumption, stable tinning conditions for optimum product quality and precise process control.

At a process speed of up to 450 meters per minute the T1 to T5 and DR6 to DR10 materials will be coated with tin layers ranging from 1.0 to 11.2 g/m². The strip widths will range from 700 to 1,270 millimeters and the strip thicknesses from 0.12 to 0.6 millimeters.

The line will feature a great number of

high-performance equipment units, which impress with their environmental compatibility and economic efficiency as well as their reliability in operation, flexibility and product quality. In the entry section, a side trimming shear with scrap baller will be integrated. Prior to tinning, the strip will be prepared in a cleaning, tension levelling and pickling section. The tin coating section itself will contain one preconditioning cell and six electroplating cells. The applied tin layer will be subsequently treated in a fully inductive heating system, in order to enhance the surface quality. Finally the strip is passivized and dried.

Along the tinning line, various measuring units will be installed to ensure constant process supervision and control. In combination with the tin layer thickness measurement, this achieves the best possible product quality and production efficiency.

Rinsing water from the tinplating and the passivation processes will be reconditioned in an advanced evaporation system. In this way, further operational expenses are saved.

A separate anode caster will be used to cast the anodes without tin losses and at a steady temperature. The fully automated casting process produces perfectly shaped, high-purity tin anodes from the anode remnants and tin ingots.

Kobe Steel to Supply Vaporizers



Kobe Steel, Ltd. has announced that its intermediate fluid LNG vaporizers (IFVs) will be used in the regasification facility for the Delimara LNG Regasification Terminal under construction in Malta. Kobe Steel will supply two IFVs. Each unit will have a regasification capacity of 58 tonnes per hour. Kobe Steel plans to ship the IFVs in October 2015.

ElectroGas Malta Limited will operate the large-scale LNG receiving terminal upon

completion. J&P-AVAX S.A., one of Greece's largest construction groups, is undertaking the engineering and construction of the receiving terminal. A floating storage unit (FSU), to be moored offshore, will supply the LNG to the land-based receiving terminal, where the regasification facility will vaporize the LNG into natural gas. The natural gas will be supplied to the adjacent Delimara Power Station, Malta's largest power generation facility, and the new combined cycle power

plant to be built. Kobe Steel's IFVs will be the main equipment installed at the regasification facility.

To increase the power generation capacity of the new combined cycle power plant cold energy derived from LNG regasification of Kobe Steel's IFVs will be used in order to cool the air to the gas turbines.

At minus 160 degrees Celsius (-160 C), LNG becomes an extremely low-temperature fluid. During regasification, an enormous amount of cold energy is given off. In the past, this energy was merely discarded together with the exchange medium, such as seawater, after regasification. However in recent years, attention is focusing on the effective use of cold energy.

Kobe Steel's IFVs are highly suitable to effectively make use of cold energy. The Japanese company's cooperation with J&P-AVAX's during the early stage of design also contributed to winning the order for the IFVs.



ESAB to Close Florence Plant



ESAW Welding and Cutting Products announced recently that it will close its Florence facility by March 31, 2016. The closing is expected to mean job losses for 300 employees. The company made the announcement in a media advisory sent from its North American headquarters in Annapolis Junction, Maryland. It is also closing its facility in Roanoke, Texas,

"I hate it for the people here," said Joe W. King, executive director of Florence County

Economic Development Partnership said. "The good thing is we will have until March and time to find a suitable company for the building that is going to create jobs. Hopefully, we'll have plenty of time."

King said he had heard rumors for over a year that ESAB might close. He was disappointed but not surprised. He likened the situation to when H.J. Heinz announced it was coming to Florence and subsequently left.

Japanese Stainless Steel Imports Fall in Feb



During the month of February 2015, Japan's stainless steel product imports declined sharply compared to the previous month according to latest data released by the Japanese Ministry of Finance (MoF). Japan's total stainless steel product imports during the month totaled 12,030 tons, down 14% from the imports during the previous month. The country's stainless steel products import during January this year had totaled 13,988 tons. The total value of imports dropped from \$42.682 million CIF to \$39.242 million.

The largest export source of imports of stainless steel products by Japan was South Korea. The imports from South Korea totaled 9,283 tons. The imports from South Korea to Japan declined by 4.64% when compared with the imports during Jan '15. In second place was China with 1,019 tons. The stainless steel imports from China fell sharply by 11.5% month-on-month. The stainless steel imports from Taiwan witnessed the biggest drop, tumbling by 67.3% from the previous month. The imports from Taiwan totaled 670 tons in February.

The MoF data also indicates that the country's stainless steel import prices averaged at \$3,262.01 per ton during the month. The average prices rose by 6.9% over the month. The monthly import of special steel products other than stainless steel products totaled 54,083 tons, which is down 34% when compared with the prior month. The overall special steel products import totaled 66,113 tons, down 31% when matched with the previous month.

ThyssenKrupp Sells VDM



ThysenKrupp has agreed to sell its loss-making alloys business VDM to private equity firm Lindsay Goldberg Vogel, taking a 100 million euro (\$108.13 million) write-down on the asset as a result.

The German steelmaker which is trying to shift its focus to industrial goods, said lately it would not disclose the transaction price but added that net financial debt and pension obligations would shrink by a mid three-digit million euro amount as a result of the deal.

According to media reports the two sides were nearing agreement on a price tag of about 500 million euros. "The sale will also reduce the share of volatile materials businesses and thus support ThyssenKrupp on

its strategic way forward to becoming a diversified industrial group," Thyssen said.

High-performance alloys subsidiary VDM and stainless-steel unit AST were originally part of a bigger stainless-steel business that ThyssenKrupp sold to Outokumpu, but Outokumpu had to sell them on as a regulatory condition of the deal.

When Outokumpu failed to find buyers, ThyssenKrupp agreed last year to take back VDM and AST to save the deal and sever financial ties with the Finnish steelmaker.

VDM and AST together have a book value of more than 900 million euros and are making operating losses while being restructured.



Rio Tinto Defends Production Ramp-up



Rio Tinto has defended its iron ore strategy against calls for production caps to protect smaller miners, with chairman Jan Du Plessis saying the decision to lift production was “rational, normal economics”.

At the company's annual general meeting in London, Mr. du Plessis acknowledged plunging iron ore prices were placing its higher-margin competitors under “significant distress” and said there was further pain to come.

“We are in a cyclical industry,” he said. “I know there's a lot of controversy, a lot of late entrants into the market who have taken advantage of higher prices.”

But he said Rio Tinto's approach to production and cost-cutting was essential to ensure the mining giant stayed ahead of challenges in the market.

Maintaining a general long-term focus across the business would “help us turn volatility and uncertainty into opportunity,” he said.

“In times of increased market volatility, investors seek strength, reliability and consistency -- and in such times Rio Tinto thrives.”

Rio Tinto's iron ore business today operates at a production cost of around \$US17 per tonne. Adjusted for exchange rate and oil input costs, its average cost in 2014 was \$US19.50 per tonne.

That is well below smaller rivals such as Fortescue Metals Group, which has flagged a break-even cost at iron ore prices of \$US39 per tonne.

ArcelorMittal JVs with CLN

ArcelorMittal Distribution Solutions Italia (AMDSI) and CLN Group recently announced the formation of ArcelorMittal CLN Distribuzione Italia, a joint venture between the two companies, that brings together two of Italy's leading steel distribution companies. ArcelorMittal CLN Distribuzione Italia will merge the assets and activities of both companies in the flat carbon steel service centre business in Italy.

ArcelorMittal CLN Distribuzione Italia will offer a complete and innovative range of flat carbon steel products including hot rolled, cold rolled and coated steels, providing a best in class service from its 15 sites throughout Italy and serving all market sectors including automotive, household appliances, general industry and construction.

“ArcelorMittal is very pleased to announce this new venture to the Italian market. The CLN Group has been a long standing, significant partner of ArcelorMittal's for many years. Both companies will combine their offerings to create a new business focused on providing added value services for our Italian customers” commented Alain Le Grix de la Salle, head of Business Coordination in ArcelorMittal Europe.



“Combining our operations creates a stronger company with broader reach and increased ability to serve our customer base. It creates one of the leading steel distributors in Italy, with an expanded product range and more routes to market. This is an exciting development for our customers and I look forward to the challenge of ensuring ArcelorMittal CLN Distribuzione Italia builds a reputation for delivering exceptional high quality product and top class customer service. Our vision is to establish leadership with the aim to consolidate and develop new business relations, based on support and relationship, integrating product innovation and process technologies that anticipate our customer's needs” said Gabriele Perris Magnetto, chief executive officer of CLN Group.

Tata Steel Expands in Scandinavia

TATA Steel has expanded its business interests in Scandinavia. A deal with the Swedish firm SSAB has seen the company acquire two strip products service centres and the remaining half share in a third centre. The centres are in Halmstad, Sweden, Naantali, Finland, and Frederikstad, Norway. Together the three businesses employ about 180 people.

Henrik Adam, the chief commercial officer of Tata Steel in Europe, said, “The addition of these service-oriented operations provides an excellent fit with Tata Steel's existing business, given its focus on supplying customers with the increasingly innovative products and services they need to be competitive.

“We have served customers in the Nordic region for many years and there is an



increasing requirement in the region for the kinds of advanced strip products Tata Steel makes. These additions to our regional processing capability will help improve the products and services we can offer Nordic customers”.

“We are delighted to be welcoming 180 new colleagues who will help us improve the support we already offer consumers of strip products in the Nordic region.”



Indonesia Reviews Hot Rolled Coil Imports

Ahead of the expiration of anti-dumping measures protecting domestic producers, the Anti-Dumping Committee (KADI) of Indonesia has initiated a sunset review of hot rolled coil (HRC) imports from Malaysia and South Korea.

The steel product has been subject to punitive duties of 48.4 percent for Malaysian manufacturers and up to 3.8 percent for Korean producers since 2011. KADI chief Ernawati said recently that the new probe was being conducted based on a request from Indonesia's major steel maker PT Krakatau Steel. "KADI has found initial evidence that some of the overall imported HRC from South Korea and Malaysia in 2014 was still dumped," she said in a statement.

Both countries together made up 43 percent of the total steel used in building structures and making automotive components last year. The sunset review looks for unfair trade practices before the end of the imposition of anti-dumping duties that normally lasts five years. It can result in the charging of new duties

POSCO's New Service Centre



POSCO is focusing on automotive steel sheet reduction. In this context, the steelmaker is in a hurry to set up another technical service center in Detroit before the end of this year.

At present, POSCO is running three technical service centers in the Americas. Those in Mexico City and Birmingham were put into operation in July last year, and the third one, which is located in Houston, was opened in January this year. It is said that this aggressive expansion is based on the technical service center in Mexico providing high-quality alternatives to the previously supplied products for those heavy-duty truck manufacturers in the United States.

Recently, Ford announced that it would use plastic and aluminum instead of steel for its new, fuel-efficient models. The news has urged POSCO to work on the center in Detroit because it could result in a decline in the demand for its steel products.

POSCO's technical service centers will provide timely technical assistance for its customers while addressing inconveniences arising with regard to its steel products. POSCO is currently running 23 technical service centers in the Americas, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the like.

In particular, those in Europe are concentrating on solution marketing for automakers.

Siemens Liquid Cooling Converters Reduces Energy Consumption

The liquid-cooled Sinamics S120 Cabinet Modules frequency converter from Siemens is a converter for use in harsh ambient conditions. Efficient heat dissipation means there is no need for air conditioning, which markedly reduces energy consumption. Both optimized layout and effective cooling have helped to reduce the module's footprint. Since the liquid-cooled Sinamics S120 Cabinet Modules frequency converter is integrated into commercially available engineering tools it also makes ordering easier.

Sinamics S120 Cabinet Modules frequency converters are part of a modular cabinet system for multi-motor drives. Siemens has extended this portfolio with a view to using it in such specifically harsh environments as in mining or the steel industry, where it makes sense to use a sealed cabinet to protect against chemically aggressive atmospheres. The liquid-cooled Sinamics S120 Cabinet Modules provides a liquid cooling solution that is fully enclosed



in order to protect the frequency converters against hostile ambient conditions. Here, a special cooling technology makes heat dissipation efficient and renders air conditioning unnecessary. Added to this,

liquid cooling uses little energy which makes for leveraging additional energy savings potential. Heat recovery principles can also be exploited by using the coolant heated up during the cooling process to provide low-cost process heat or room heating.

All individual liquid-cooled Sinamics S120 Cabinet Modules are perfectly compatible, modular, and can be flexibly combined. Additionally a wide range of options is available, allowing specific requirements to be accommodated with ease. Factory pre-configuration and integration into commercially available selection and engineering tools, such as the Catalog, PMD and Sizer, make for simple ordering, installing, and commissioning of the system.

Sinamics S120 Cabinet Modules converters are mainly used in process, steel, and automotive industries and in the mining.

This section is a compilation from various company press releases, business dailies & trade publications.