

Global pulp deliveries increase in February, consumption rises in Europe while stocks decline

After a brief intermezzo in January, global deliveries for market pulp was on the upswing again in February. The international Pulp and Paper Products Council (PPPC) reported a 4 per cent month-on-month increase in market pulp deliveries to 4.51 million t in February. In comparison with the same month of 2023, pulp deliveries in February of this year were up by 13 per cent.

The 1.94 million t of bleached softwood pulp delivered in February represented about 7 per cent more than in January 2024 and 11 per cent more than in February 2023. Deliveries of bleached hardwood pulp stood at 2.42 million t in February, an increase of 2 per cent compared with January and 17 per cent versus the same month of the previous year. According to PPPC, the additional production/delivery day as a result

of the leap year in 2024 had a positive impact on delivery volumes in February. Moreover, the Montréal-based international industry organisation pointed out that delivery volumes in February 2023 were considerably influenced by inventory destocking effects at customers.

In the first two months of 2024, deliveries of market pulp were up 10 per cent to 8.85 million t, according to PPPC. Deliveries of 4.80 million t bleached hardwood pulp in the first two months represented an increase of 16 per cent over the same period of the previous year. Shipments of bleached softwood pulp amounted to 3.75 million t, an increase of 5 per cent.

Deliveries to China in the first two months of the year stood at 3.17 million t, up by 24 per cent year on year. PPPC also reported significant volume

growth of 17 per cent to 1.35 million t in deliveries to Africa and other Asian countries. Members of PPPC supplied 2.13 million t of market pulp to Europe and 1.24 million t to North America in the first two months of this year, representing year-on-year increases of 2 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively.

Despite the increase in deliveries, producers' stocks grew by 1 day to a total of 42 production days in February. Inventories of bleached hardwood pulp increased by 4 to 45 days. This reflected hardwood pulp producers' efforts to rebuild their inventories after reaching a "cyclical low of just 37 days" last December, said PPPC. By contrast, producers reduced their stocks of bleached softwood pulp in February by 2 to 39 production days.

Stocks at European ports decline again in February

Pulp stocks at European ports amounted to 1.16 million t in February, down by 10 per cent versus January. The steepest volume decline, according to Europulp, was seen in the ports of the Netherlands/Belgium, where volumes dropped nearly 77,000 t to 528,000 t, followed by Italy with a decline of 37,000 t to 273,000 t and Spain with a decrease of 30,000 t to 62,000 t. The largest decline in percentage terms (-33 per cent) was recorded in Spain. Inventory levels in Germany remained basically unchanged in February compared with the previous month, while ports in France and Switzerland saw an increase of 25,000 t to almost 108,000 t.

Compared with the same month of the prior year, stocks held at European ports in February 2024 were 31 per cent lower. This was primarily due to the developments at ports in Germany (-63,000 t), Italy (-170,000 t) and the Netherlands/Belgium (-238,000 t).

World market pulp statistics February 2024

1,000 t	Feb 2024	Jan 2024*	Feb 2023
Shipments	4,509	4,339	3,996
Bleached Softwood	1,942	1,812	1,750
Bleached Hardwood	2,423	2,372	2,071
Unbleached kraft pulp (UKP)	141	152	172
Sulphite	3	3	2
Producer inventories (Days of supply at month-end)	42	41	53
Bleached Softwood	39	41	49
Bleached Hardwood	45	41	57

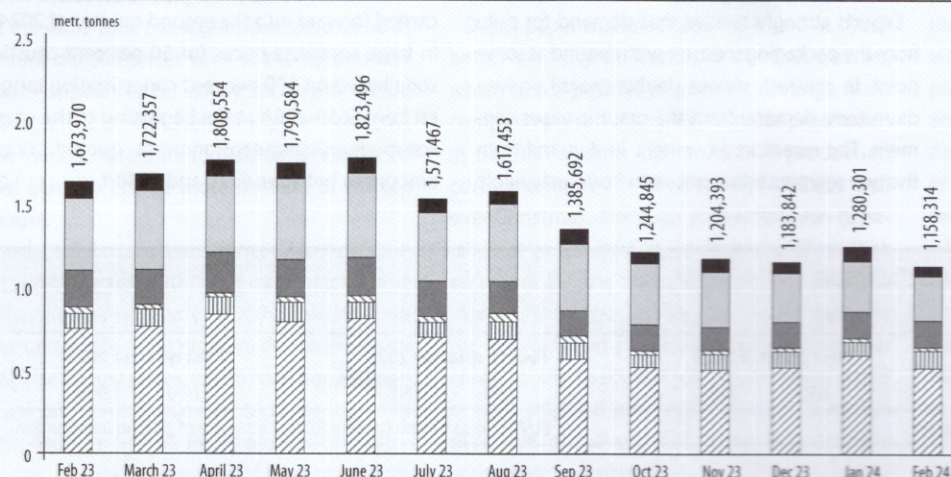
* January figures partially revised.

Compiled data based on a sample of 20 countries (17 current producers and 3 past producers included in the historical data) which together account for 82 per cent of world chemical market pulp capacity.

Source: Pulp and Paper Products Council

Stocks of woodpulp in European ports

February 2023 - February 2024



	Feb 24	Jan 24	Feb 23
ES	61,918	92,095	105,528
IT	273,280	310,329	442,765
DE	164,757	164,180	227,609
UK	22,170	23,710	40,452
FR/CH	107,654	82,810	91,077
NL/BE	528,535	607,177	766,539
Total	1,158,314	1,280,301	1,673,970

Source: Europulp

Inventories and consumption of pulp consumers in Europe

February 2024

tonnes		UNBLEACHED		BLEACHED / SEMI-BLEACHED			Total	Previous year
		Sulphite & Kraft	Softwood sulphite	Hardwood sulphite	Softwood kraft	Hardwood kraft		
Inventories								
January	2024	10,302	27,835	7,825	205,914	439,542	691,418	638,248
February	2024	9,725	22,824	10,089	209,348	424,047	676,033	692,122
Consumption								
January	2024	9,609	25,218	9,035	250,216	538,695	832,773	826,217
February	2024	12,227	27,750	9,240	250,469	553,420	853,106	746,718

As of now, data for hardwood pulp are published in the monthly report. Quarterly reports will not be published any more.

NB: Total and previous year total do not include DIP and CTMP, figures are constantly revised.

Each national Association has to provide an estimation for 100% of the national volumes out of their samples (from 80% to 100% depending on the countries).

Source: UTIPULP

In February 2022, stocks held in European ports amounted to around 1.15 million t, roughly on a par with this year's volumes.

Utipulp reports increase in market pulp consumption

According to Utipulp, the association of European pulp converters, its member companies utilised around 853,000 t of market pulp in February 2024. This volume was up by 2 per cent compared with the previous month and 14 per cent

versus February 2023. Consumption of bleached softwood pulp amounted to 250,000 t, nearly unchanged month on month, but almost 2 per cent lower than in the prior-year month. In February 2024, some 553,000 t of bleached hardwood pulp were consumed, representing an increase of 3 per cent versus the preceding month and 23 per cent year on year.

The total stocks of market pulp held by converters amounted to 676,000 t in February 2024, down by 2 per cent compared with both Janu-

ary 2024 and February 2023. Stocks of bleached hardwood kraft pulp stood at 424,000 t, roughly 4 per cent below the previous month but 1 per cent above the prior-year level. The 209,000 t of bleached softwood pulp held by converters represented a 1 per cent decline compared to the previous month and 2 per cent versus one year earlier.

Total inventory at pulp consumers decreased by 1 day between January and February to 26 production days. In February 2023, converters had stocks amounting to 23 days. □

EU Waste Shipments Regulation adopted by Council

The EU member states' representatives unanimously approved the revised EU Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR), closing the adoption procedure. The Regulation will now be signed by the presidents of the EU Parliament and Council and then be published in the EU's Official Journal. It will enter into force on the twentieth day following publication, but the application of many of its provisions will only begin after a transition period of 24 months after the publication date.

Among other changes, the revised WSR will tighten the requirements for exports of non-hazardous waste destined for recycling or recovery in countries that are not members of the OECD. The recipient countries will not only have to agree to such shipments in principle, as is the case at present. They will also have to provide comprehensive evidence that adequate capacities and other conditions are in place to ensure the environmentally sound management of the imported waste. Based on these applications, the EU Commission will draw up list of countries and the types of waste they can receive. Shipments from the EU to countries not on the list will be banned.

Depending on the waste type and destination country, exporters will have to initiate the prior

notification and consent procedure and/or comply with national control procedures. The WSR will also require them to independently audit the specific receiving recovery facility. This requirement also applies to shipments from the EU to other OECD countries.

In a joint statement to the minutes of the Council, Bulgaria, Ireland and the Netherlands commented that they are "positively disposed towards the revision of the Waste Shipment Regulation" in general, but underline that it is "of utmost importance that Article XI of the GATT is fully respected and that derogations from this provision are justifiable in light of the exceptions provided for in the GATT". The agreement's Article XI governs the "general elimination of quantitative restrictions" in international trade and the conditions for exemptions. The three EU members ask the European Commission to "continue monitoring the Regulation's effects and assessing its consistency with the EU's legal obligations under the relevant WTO agreements".

The revised Waste Shipments Regulation also provides for the digitalisation of administrative procedures. In a statement released after the Council vote, the European Waste Management

Association (FEAD) described improvements in the efficiency of procedures as one of its top priorities. The umbrella organisation also welcomed the clarification in the Regulation's recitals that a shipment is not to be classified as illegal if there are only minor clerical errors in the documentation.

The association, which represents the interests of the private waste management industry, regrets, however, that the possibility of tacit consent to a notification is limited to transit countries. FEAD underlines the competent authorities' need for adequate human and material resources and calls on the EU member states to ensure that notifications can be processed in a timely manner "so that we can overcome the long and persistent delays we are currently facing". □

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