

imports, followed by Argentina (9.7 percent), Peru and the United Kingdom (6.3 percent each), and China (6.0 percent).

Gold imports, which accounted for nearly one third of the increase, were up by \$3.1 billion (67.8 percent) to \$7.6 billion. Three countries—Argentina, Peru and the United Kingdom—accounted for nearly 60 percent of the overall gain in gold imports, up by \$888 million, \$547 million, and \$377 million, respectively. Thus, gold accounted for some 96.6 percent of the overall increase in metal and mineral imports from Argentina, some 91.0 percent for these imports from Peru, and 63.0 percent of these imports from the United Kingdom.

With exports of metals and minerals increasing by more than imports in 2010, the trade surplus for this category widened by \$5.4 billion to \$14.4 billion.

Chemicals, Plastics, and Rubber¹²

Exports of chemicals, plastics, and rubber increased by \$2.7 billion to \$41.5 billion in 2010. Fertilizers posted the largest gain, up \$1.4 billion, followed by plastics (up \$744 million), organic chemicals (up \$670 million), inorganic chemicals (up \$480 million), and rubber (up \$410 million). A \$1.4 billion decline in pharmaceuticals put a cap on the gains. The United States accounted for over 60 percent of the gains, Brazil accounted for 20 percent and China 10 percent.

The overall gain in exports of fertilizers was due to a \$1.5-billion rise in potash exports and a \$98-million decline in nitrogen based fertilizers. The United States accounted for slightly over half of the increase in potash exports, with Brazil, China and Malaysia together accounting for a further 38 percent of the overall increase.

Exports of plastics were up by 7.2 percent (\$744 million). Polyethylene (up \$391 million) and polyvinyl chloride (up \$67 million) were responsible for over 60 percent of the overall gain in plastics.

The net decline in exports of pharmaceuticals was the result of a \$1.7-billion decline in dosage-form medicaments that was partially offset by a \$166-million increase in exports of blood and vaccines. The United States accounted for 73.5 percent of the decline for dosage-form medicaments, with Ireland (down 12.5 percent) and Switzerland (down 10.7 percent) accounting for much of the remainder.

Imports of chemicals were up by \$1.8 billion to \$55.2 billion in 2010. The gains were greatest for plastics (up \$1.3 billion), rubber (up \$495 million), and inorganic chemicals (up \$437 million), but were partially offset by a \$1.0-billion decrease in imports of pharmaceuticals. The bulk of the gains came from increased imports from the United States (up \$1.7 billion), China (up \$352 million), and Kazakhstan (up \$179 million), while notable declines were registered for Ireland (down \$685 million), Switzerland (down \$296 million) and Australia (down \$186 million).

Canadian imports of plastics were up across most subcategories, most notably for polypropylene (up \$253 million), polyethylene (up \$207 million), polyacrylics (up \$135 million) and polyesters (up \$110 million). Imports from the United States were up \$1.2 billion, to account for over 85 percent of the overall increase in plastics imports.

Imports of rubber and related products were led by increases in natural rubber (up \$222 million) and synthetic rubber (up \$127 million) to account for about 70 percent of the overall advance in this subcategory.

¹² HS Chapters 28 through 40.