

The high export numbers being noted for Asian n-butanol business out of the US Gulf in October/November have now subsided somewhat. Current n-butanol prices in Asia are being heard at around \$630-640/ton cfr main Asian port, which would net back to about \$570-580/ton fob US Gulf, while one US producer concluded a 2,000 ton parcel to China at \$650-660/ton cfr, or around \$590/ton fob US Gulf, at the beginning of December.

The US n-butanol market is now said to be fairly well balanced. Dow at Taft has overcome its earlier hurricane problems, while Eastman came off its sales plan on butanols earlier in December.

All four US butanols producers have posted at 3 c/lb price hike on n- and iso-butanol, effective 1 January. At present, prices for n-butanol industrial accounts of around 4-5 mmlbs/year are in the low thirties cents range, and those taking 1 mmlbs/year approaching the mid-thirties level.

n-Butanol tanktruck delivered prices in West Europe have been holding up well during December, with Euro 680-690/ton and even over Euro 700/ton type numbers mentioned for spot business. However, at the other end of the scale, prices as low as Euro 650-660/ton are also heard.

From a supply standpoint, Celanese lost around ten days 2-EH/butanols production at Oberhausen during first-half December, firstly due to syngas problems but then, reportedly, due to problems with a heat exchanger. Also, Perstorp lost a couple of days production for technical reasons in its oxo alcohols plant at Stenungsund from the week-end 15 December, and was still running at reduced output later in the following week, while Oxochimie had some compressor problems at its Lavera alcohols plant earlier in the month.

	Nov-02	Dec-02			Dec-02
<b>US PRICES</b>	¢/pound	¢/pound			\$/ton
Industrial Accounts	32-35	31-34	DEL		683-750
Export	25.9-26.5	25.9-26.5	FOB		570-585
<b>EUROPEAN PRICES</b>	€/ton	€/ton			\$/ton
Contract, Tanktrucks	670-700	675-700	DEL		681-706
Export (Far East)	613-618	565-570			570-575
<b>ASIAN PRICES</b>	\$/ton	\$/ton			
Import	695-715	630-640	CFR		

