Department for Business Innovation & Skills

Monthly Statistics of Building Materials and Components

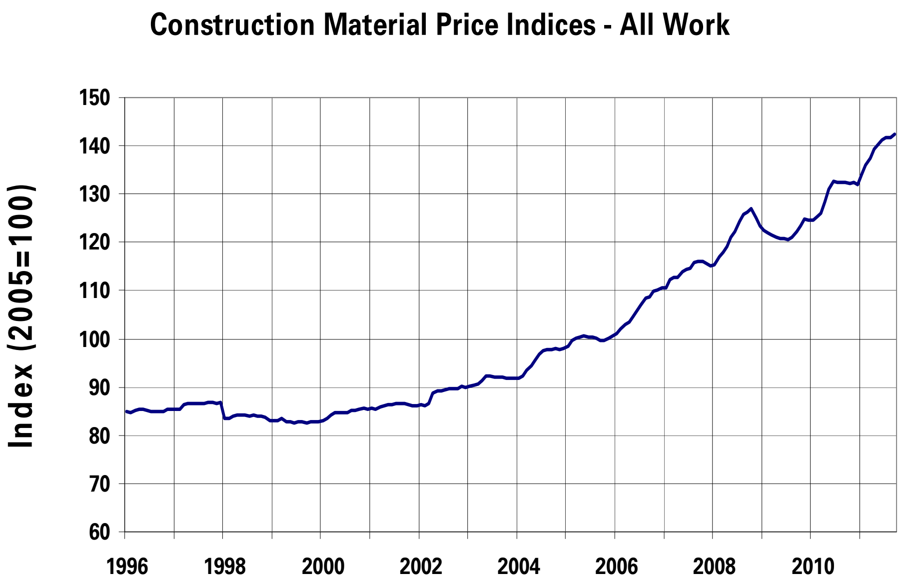
Commentary

October 2011

Construction Price Indices

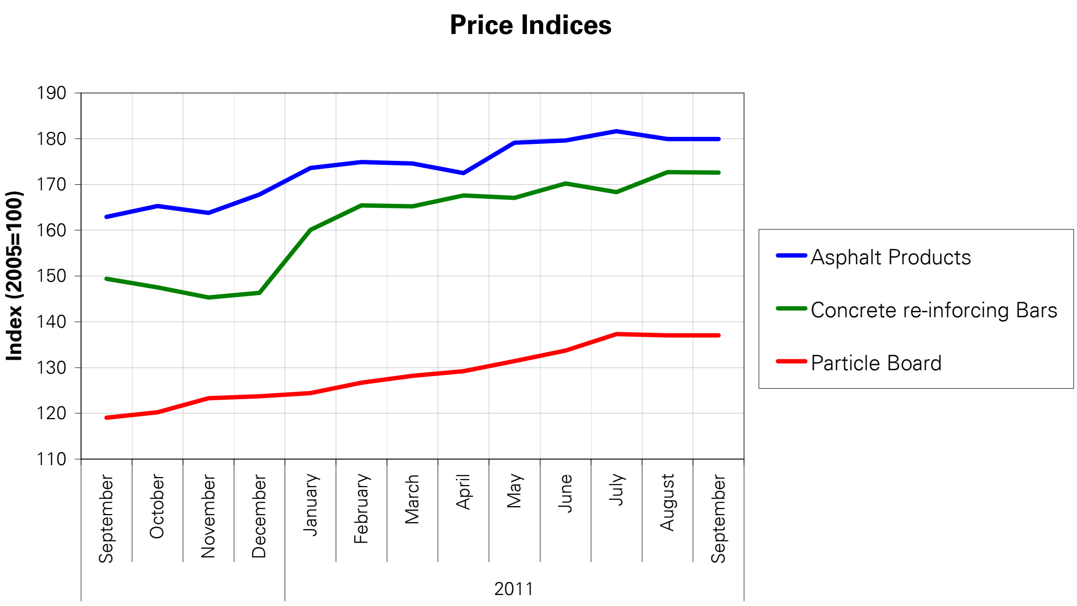
Provisional data show that the 'All Work' Construction Material Price Index maintained its recent upward momentum in September, rising by 0.6% from August. This rise was the 8th in the last 9 months, pushing the annual rate of increase in material prices to a 5-month high of 7.5%.

The rise in the headline 'All Work' index in September was broad-based, reflecting monthly increases in the 'New Housing' (up 0.3%), 'Other New Work' (up 0.6%) and 'Repair and Maintenance' (up 0.4%) sub-indices.



This data is taken from Table 1

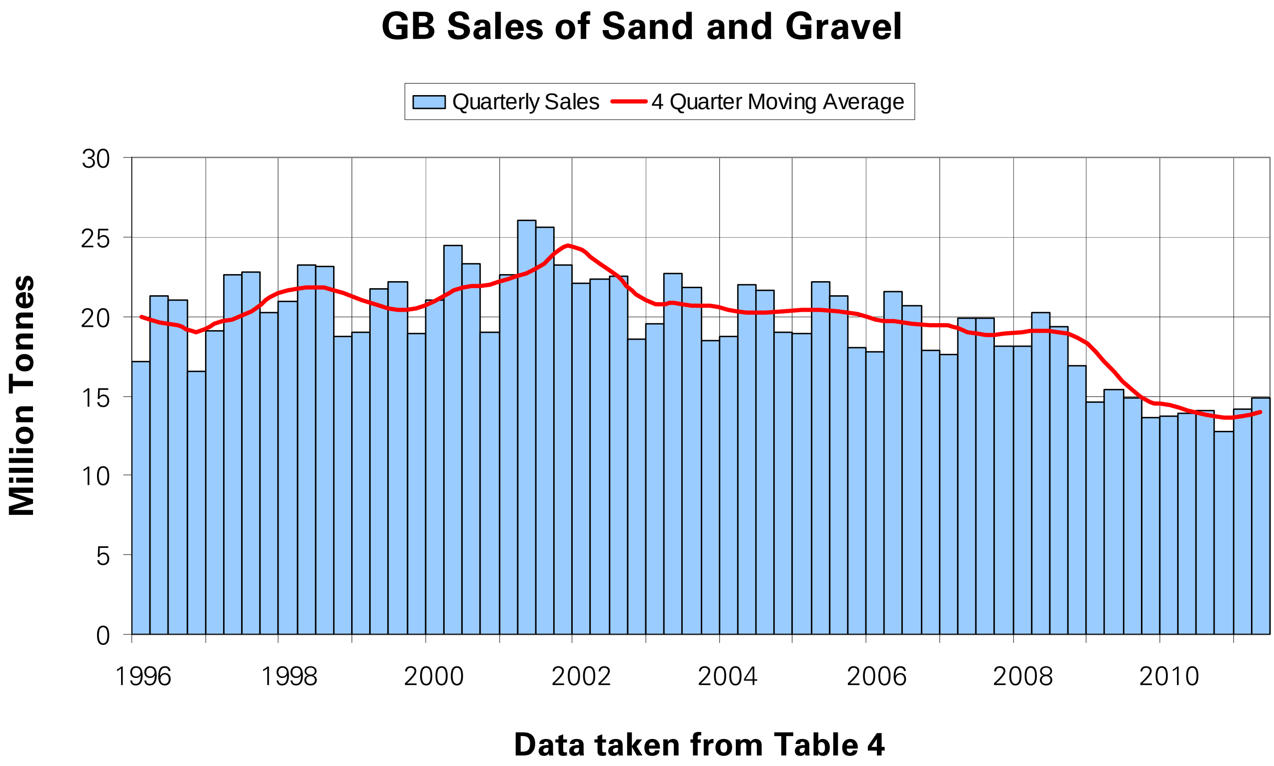
Concrete Reinforcing Bars (up 15.5%), Particle Board (up 15.1%) and Asphalt products (up 10.4%) experienced the largest price increases in the year to September. Over the same period, the materials that saw the largest price falls were Imported Plywood (down 3.3%) and Imported Sawn or Planned Wood (down 2.1%).



Data Taken From Table 2

Sand and Gravel

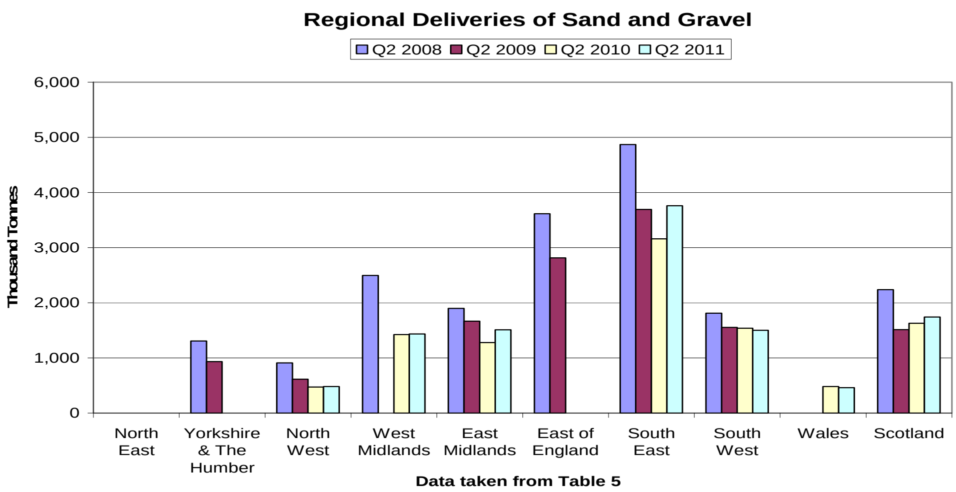
Total sales of Sand and Gravel in Great Britain amounted to 14.8 million tonnes in 2011Q2, up 6.4% from a year earlier. This increase reflected a 23.0% increase in the quantity of sand sold for concreting. By contrast, the quantity of sand sold for building fell by 0.4% over the same period.



The South East continues to be the dominant sales region for Sand and Gravel, accounting for a quarter of all sales in Great Britain in 2011Q2.

Sales of Sand and Gravel increased by 19.0% in the South East, 18.0% in the East Midlands and by 7.0% in Scotland in the year to 2011Q2. Over the same period, the region experiencing the largest fall in sales of Sand and Gravel was Wales (down 4.8%).

In the year to 2011Q2, sales growth in the South East was driven by sales increases in Greater London (up 28.2%), Kent (up 21.5%) and Hampshire (up 9.3%).

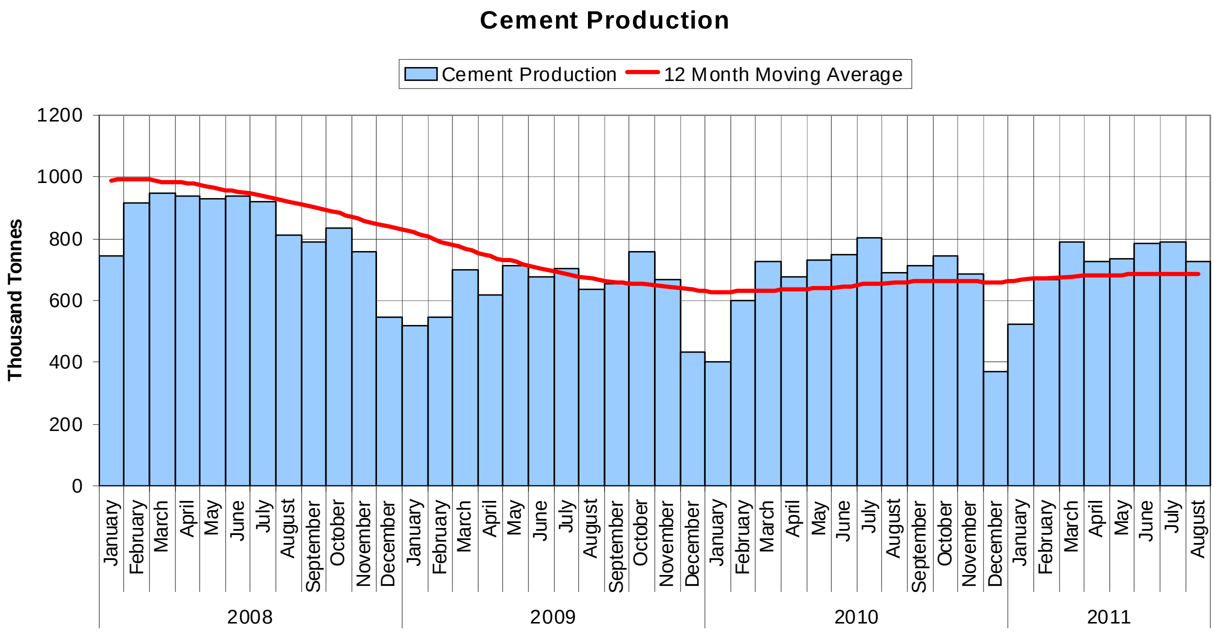


Note: Missing values for some quarters indicates that data are disclosive

Slate, Cement and Other Building Materials

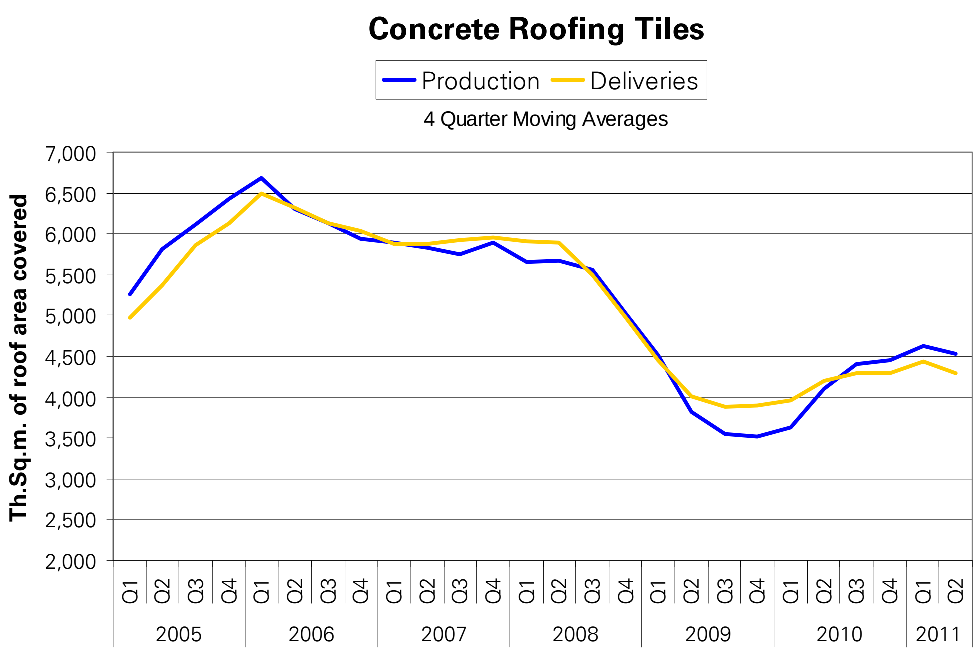
In 2011Q2, production of slate amounted to 16,214 tonnes in Great Britain – up 11.3% from the previous quarter. Over the same period, deliveries of slate rose by 10.9%, to 15,911 tonnes, while deliveries of Slate for Fill increased by 9.1%, to 216,524 tonnes, the highest figure since 2008.

Having generally risen over the first half of 2011, cement production in Great Britain registered a sharp monthly fall of 8.2% in August. However, it remained 5.3% higher than in August last year. Deliveries of cement also fell in August, by 1.1%, the second successive monthly fall. Unlike cement, clinker production rose by 3.3% in August, maintaining its general upward trend seen since the beginning of the year.



Data taken from Table 8

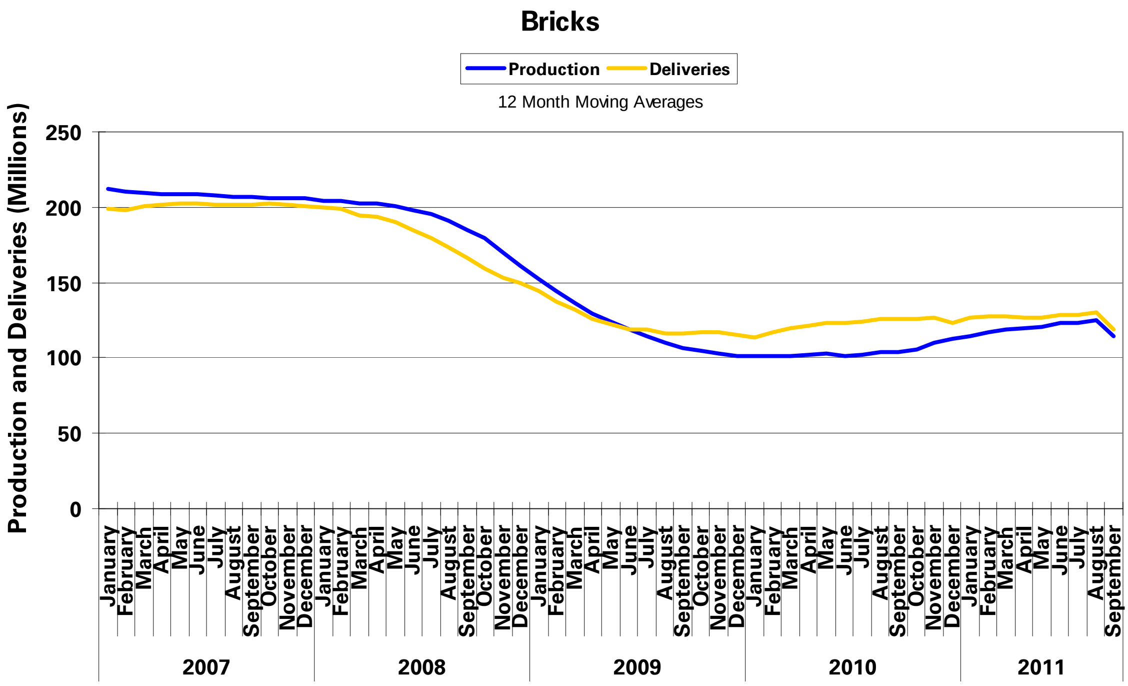
Production of Concrete Roofing Tiles fell by 5.3% on the quarter in 2011Q2, following a sharp 22.2% quarterly increase in 2011. Over the same period, deliveries of Concrete Roofing Tiles rose by 7.8% while deliveries of 'Ready-mixed concrete' rose by 2.1%.



Data taken from Table 13

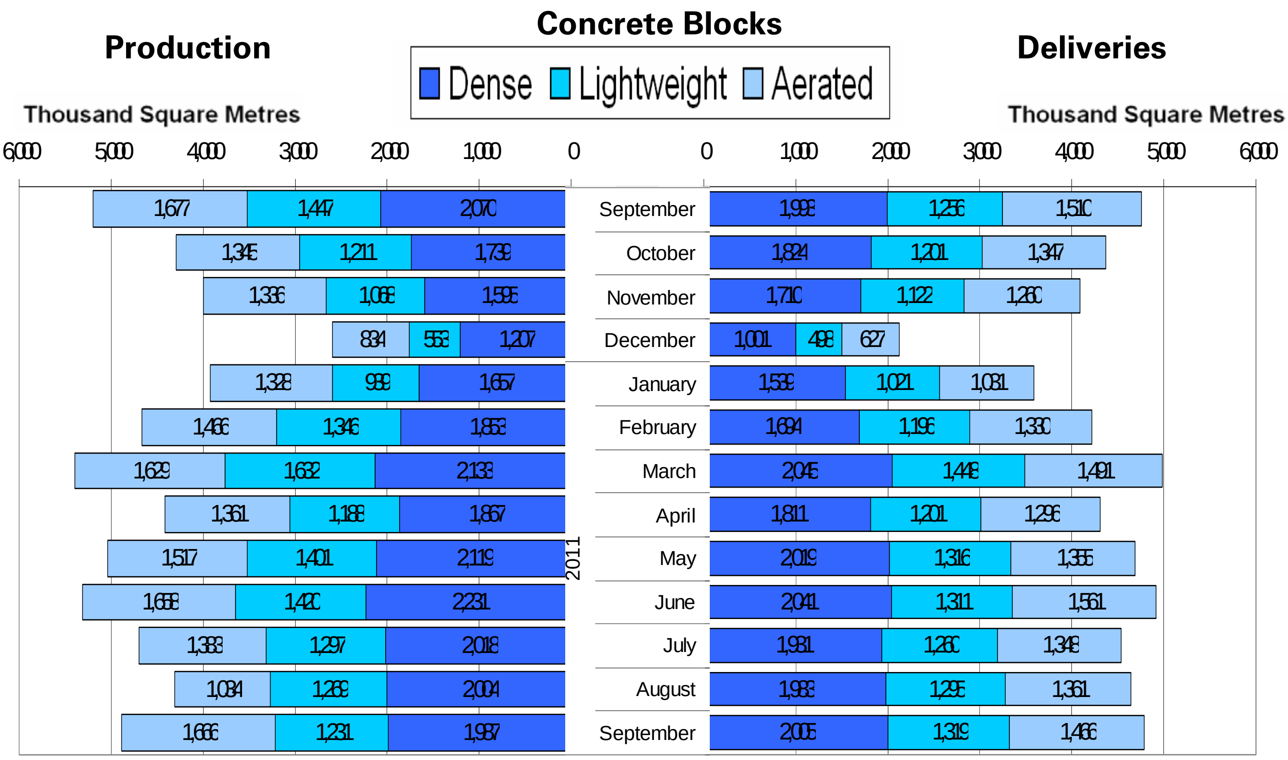
Bricks and Concrete Blocks

Provisional data show that total production of bricks rose by 9.7% between August and September, while deliveries increased by 2.9%. The increase in total production was due to solid rises in the production of Facing and Engineering bricks, of 12.2% and 10.5% respectively, offsetting a fall of 8.1% in Common bricks output. In September, total production of bricks was 10.5% higher than in the same month a year ago, while deliveries were 12.6% higher.



Data taken from Table 9

Provisional data for September show that total production of concrete blocks rose by 13.4% on the month in September, following declines in the previous two months. The increase was due to a sharp rise in 'Aerated' blocks production offsetting falls in the production of 'Dense' and 'Lightweight' blocks. Deliveries increased by 3.3% over the same period, reflecting increases in deliveries in all types of concrete blocks.



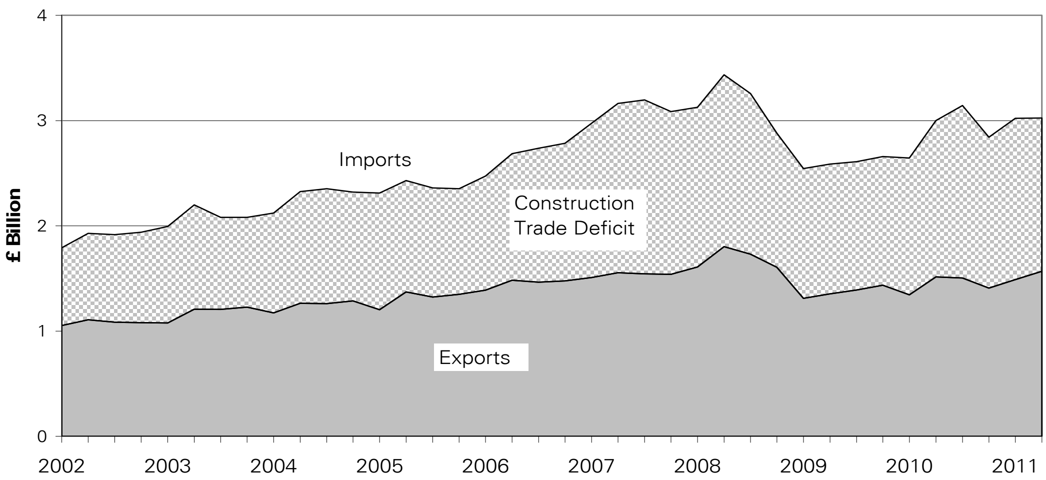
Imports and Exports of Selected Building Materials and Components

Exports of construction materials rose by 5.4% on the quarter in 2011Q2 (to £1,489 million), faster than imports (up 0.1%, to £3,025 million). As a result, the trade deficit narrowed by £77 million, to £1,455 million, in 2011Q2. 'Products and components' accounted for 83% of all construction material imports and 89% of all construction material exports in 2011Q2.

The decrease in the total trade deficit on the quarter in 2011Q2 was due to a narrowing in the trade deficit in 'products and components' of £150 million. Over the same period, the trade deficit in 'semi-manufactures' and 'raw materials' widened by £67 million and £6 million, respectively.

The top five imported construction materials in 2011Q2 were Electrical Wires, Sawn Wood, Structural Units (Steel), Air Conditioning Equipment, and Lamps & Fittings. The top five exported materials were Paint and Varnishes, Electrical Wires, Structural Units (Steel), Air Conditioning Equipment and Lamps & Fittings.

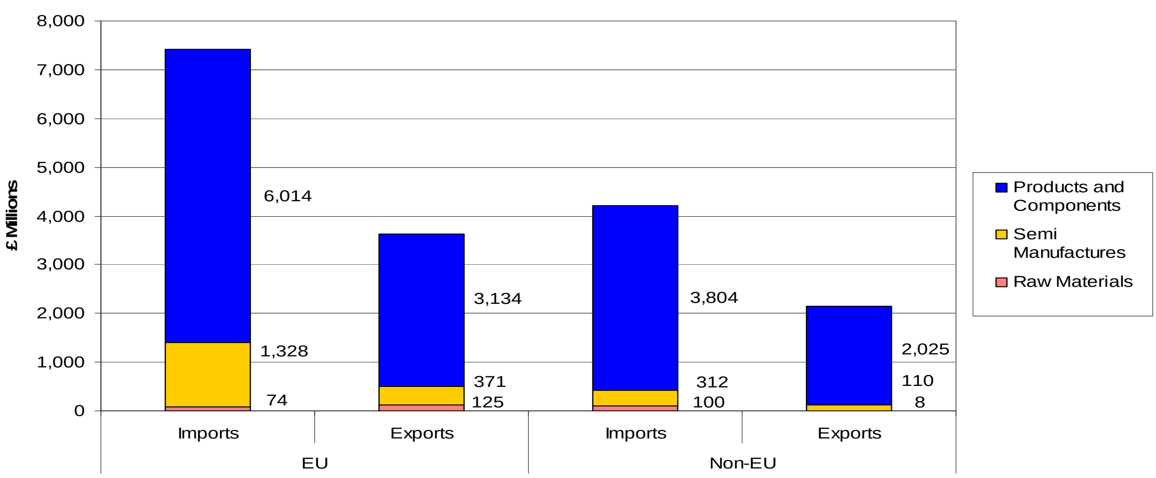
Quarterly Imports and Exports of Building Materials and Components



Data is taken from Table 14

In 2010, around 64% of all building material imports were from EU countries, while 63% of exports were to EU countries. UK's largest export market for building materials was Ireland, followed by Germany, France, the Netherlands and the USA. The largest import market was Germany, followed by China, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Breakdown of Construction Imports and Exports for 2010



Data taken from Table 15

Please send us any comments or feedback you may have about this commentary.

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