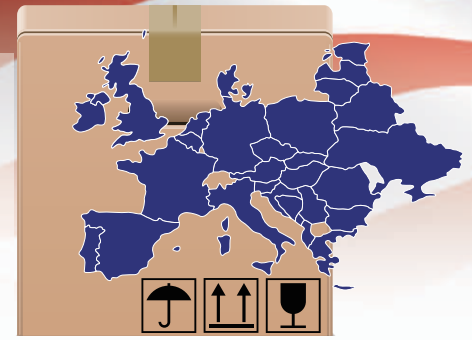


Fastener Trade Overview: The United States and Europe

by Chelsea Craven



The fastener trade between the United States and Europe has shown some growth this year, but also has seen some setbacks. One growth area is the amount of exports headed from the United States to Europe. From January through July of this year, fastener exports to Europe totaled over US \$325 million, a 9% increase from the same time last year. A continual push for exports in the United States coupled with increased demand in Europe for certain fasteners can be attributed to the rise. In addition, high duties on fasteners from China have influenced where Europe sources their fasteners from.

Fasteners imported to the United States from Europe, on the other hand, are lagging when compared to last year's volume. From January through July of this year, fastener imports totaled just over US \$380 million, a 4% decrease from what was imported last year at this time.

The United States has a slightly negative trade balance with Europe when it comes to the fastener trade. As seen in **Figure A**, some months have been close to boasting a positive trade balance. With the recent rise in fastener exports along with a decrease in imports, it's likely we will see a positive trade balance in months to come.

This article will focus on imports and exports of fasteners between the United States and Europe. We will look at past trends for specific countries, the most-popular and least-popular products, and examine current prices of fasteners.



Country Overview

Three-fourths of all U.S. fastener imports from Europe come from only four

Figure A

U.S. Fastener Trade with Europe

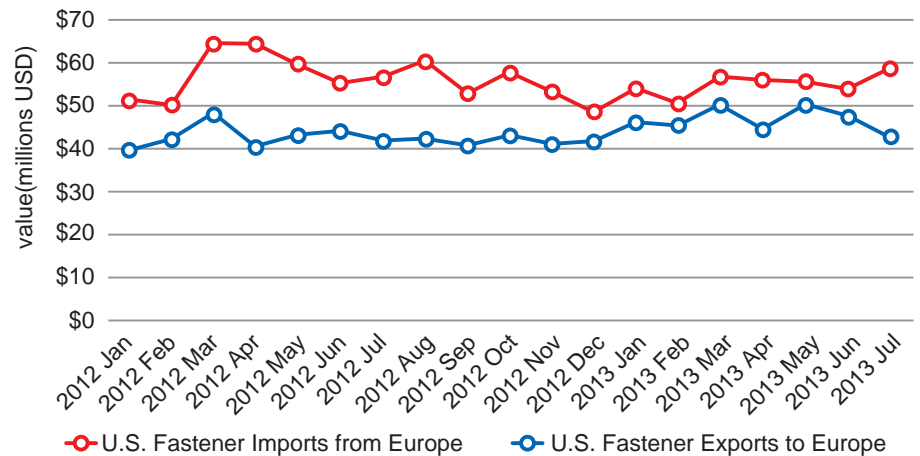
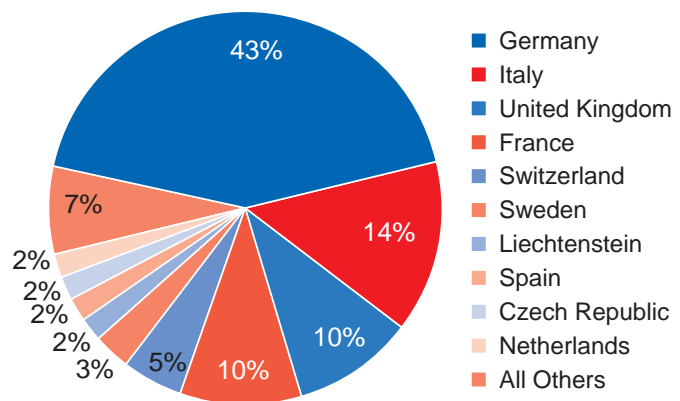


Figure B

U.S. Imports of Fasteners from Europe

(Jan-July 2013)



countries: Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, and France. All of these countries except the United Kingdom have seen a decrease in the amount of fasteners supplied to the United States; most notable is Italy with a decrease of nearly 14% since last year. **Figure B** below illustrates the breakdown of countries.

On the export side, as mentioned above, many countries in Europe are seeing increased imports of American-made fasteners. The United Kingdom, France, and Germany are among the top three importers in Europe. France has seen a 22% increase in USA-made fasteners and Italy, ranked fourth, has seen a 34% increase since last year. **Figure C** below illustrates where the majority of fastener exports from the U.S. are destined.

Product Overview

Threaded screws, bolts, and nuts are among the most popular fasteners imported to the U.S. from Europe. Non-threaded articles, the third most popular type of fastener import, are one of the few types that have seen a steady increase in recent months. Wood screws, coach screws, and screw hooks are among the least-imported fasteners from Europe, with a combined import value of just over US \$3 million for the first seven months of the year. Among the top threaded articles being imported are bolts, hex screws, studs, and cap screws. Socket screws and set screws are at the bottom of this list of imports. **Figure D** illustrates a trend of the most popular fastener imports.

The top U.S. exports of fasteners to Europe include threaded screws, nuts, and non-threaded articles. Threaded articles, bolts most notably, have shown one of the biggest increases in exports from last year. As seen in **Figure E** below, exports of non-threaded fastener articles saw a rise in May of this year and have since seen two months of decreases. Spring washers, screw hooks, and wood screws are some of the least-exported fasteners from the United States.

Pricing Overview

As imports of fasteners to the United States have decreased from last year, the price has not followed suit. This year, the price for all imported fasteners from Europe is at US \$5.42, up from US \$4.02 last year and US \$3.52 in 2011. That's nearly US \$2 per kilogram increase in just two years! As the price continues upward, the United States will turn towards less expensive options to source fasteners from.

Exports of fasteners from the United States to Europe have also increased in price, albeit not as drastically as the import side. This year prices are at US \$15.05, up from US \$14.55 last year and US \$14.10 in 2011. In general, prices are higher for American-made fasteners because of the high quality articles produced. Even with the high price, exports are growing as countries around the world realize the need for high quality fasteners.

The fastener trade between the United States and Europe is unique in that it flows both ways. With continued emphasis on exports in the United States, fasteners will likely rise to Europe. Imports to the United States from Europe will continue steady if the price does not rise too fast.

Figure C

U.S. Exports of Fasteners to Europe (Jan-July 2013)

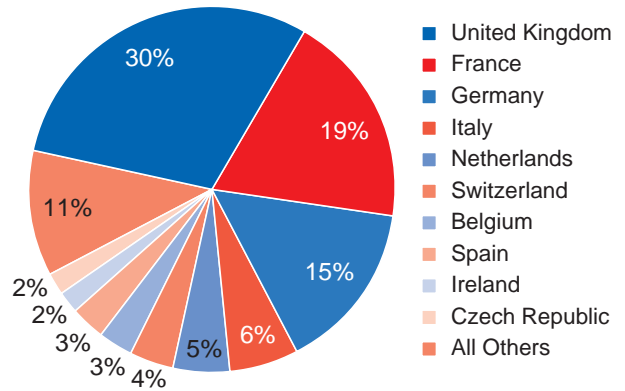


Figure D

U.S. Imports of Fasteners from Europe

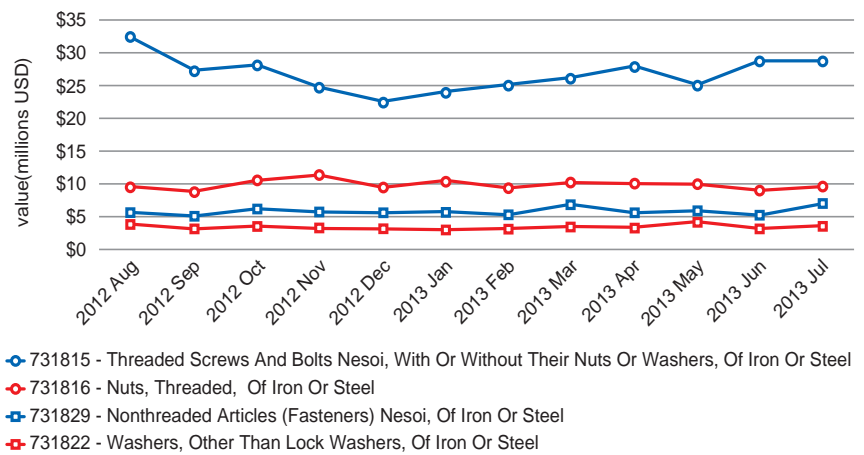


Figure E

U.S. Exports of Fasteners to Europe

