

Metals, Mining, Steel & Chemicals - APAC

China trade data: iron ore, energy, primary plastic import strong; steel net export high

Industry Overview

Dec 2023 trade data: positive for trading names, chemicals, petrol refiners

China released Dec trade data on 12 Jan. Imports of iron ore, crude oil, natural gas, and coal were strong, which is a positive for trading companies. The recovery in primary plastics import volumes is positive for petrochemical-related companies, and the decline in petrochemical product net import volumes is positive for petroleum refiners. Meanwhile, persistently high steel net export volumes are a negative for steel companies.

Energy/foods/pulp: energy imports brisk

Dec import volumes of crude oil, natural gas, pulp, and grains were noticeably strong. Energy imports overall were brisk.

Steel/iron ore/copper: iron ore imports and steel exports high

Dec iron ore import volumes, at 101mn tons, were largely flat MoM and up 10% YoY. Steel net exports were down to 7.06mn tons from 7.39mn tons in Nov, but up substantially from 4.70mn tons in Dec 2022. Copper ore import volumes remained high.

Chemicals/petroleum products: imports of primary plastics strong, net exports of refined petroleum products down heavily

Dec primary plastics imports were up slightly YoY and MoM to 2.61mn tons. Petroleum products went from a net export to a net import at 120,000 tons in Dec, down heavily from net exports of 930,000 tons in Nov and 4.42mn tons in Dec 2022.

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Refer to important disclosures on page 11 to 13.

12644750

Timestamp: 12 January 2024 04:17AM EST

12 January 2024

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Exhibit 1: Major products of China trade data

Iron ore, copper ore, and energy imports high

	2023	2023	2022
	11	10	11
Primary plastic - import (000ton)	2.61	2.60	2.54
Natural & Synthetic rubber-import(000ton)	0.72	0.69	0.76
Meat - import (000ton)	0.57	0.56	0.70
Meat - import (000ton)	18.27	14.53	13.70
Soybean - import (mn ton)	9.82	7.92	10.56
Pulp - import (000ton)	3.55	3.23	2.36
Crude oil - import (mn ton)	48.36	42.45	48.07
Natural gas - import (mn ton)	12.65	10.95	10.28
Oil products - net export (000ton)	(0.12)	0.93	4.42
Coal - import (mn ton)	47.30	43.51	30.91
Iron ore - import (mn ton)	100.86	102.74	90.86
Steel products - net export (000ton)	7.06	7.39	4.70
(export)	7.73	8.01	5.40
(import)	0.67	0.61	0.70
Copper ore - import (000ton)	2.48	2.44	2.10
All copper products - import (000ton)	0.46	0.55	0.51

Source: China customs

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1. China trade data - Major products

Exhibit 2: Major products of China trade Data - Daily

All data are based on daily basis

	2022												2023												
	1-2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1-2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	YoY		
Chemicals																									
Primary plastic - import (000ton)	83.5	95.6	80.2	77.4	79.0	75.6	81.4	91.5	83.5	92.5	81.8	81.6	82.3	71.6	74.7	78.8	75.0	85.0	88.7	83.5	86.6	84.2	2.8%		
Natural & Synthetic rubber - import (000ton)	20.2	21.5	17.9	14.9	17.9	18.7	19.1	21.7	20.7	24.6	24.6	22.4	23.8	23.4	19.8	21.1	20.4	20.9	20.9	20.3	22.8	23.3	-5.1%		
Cosmetics & clean-care products - import (\$mn)	57.9	65.6	69.1	63.6	59.3	57.3	61.4	67.4	69.2	58.9	48.8	51.1	67.5	53.3	51.2	44.1	43.1	44.9	51.5	52.0	44.6	38.5	-21.1%		
Clothing & textile yarn - export (\$mn)	851	711	786	943	1,052	1,072	999	935	807	813	816	692	851	855	817	900	875	899	873	741	789	815	-0.1%		
Energy & oil products																									
Crude oil - import (mn ton)	1.44	1.38	1.43	1.48	1.19	1.20	1.30	1.34	1.39	1.56	1.55	1.42	1.69	1.41	1.66	1.74	1.41	1.70	1.52	1.58	1.41	1.56	0.6%		
Coal - import (mn ton)	0.60	0.53	0.78	0.66	0.63	0.76	0.95	1.10	0.94	1.08	1.00	1.03	1.33	1.36	1.28	1.33	1.27	1.43	1.40	1.16	1.45	1.53	53.0%		
Natural gas - import (mn ton)	0.34	0.26	0.27	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	0.34	0.25	0.34	0.33	0.30	0.29	0.30	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.35	0.34	0.28	0.37	0.41	23.1%		
Oil products - net export (000ton)	45.0	71.6	78.0	40.6	52.2	57.5	93.0	112.4	62.0	101.4	142.6	125.1	50.2	-21.1	10.7	3.6	26.0	76.4	41.7	33.5	30.8	-3.8	-102.7%		
(export)	123.6	131.4	127.4	105.5	106.8	110.0	154.1	188.0	143.7	204.8	248.4	215.2	175.9	124.9	157.7	150.5	171.3	190.1	181.2	166.8	169.4	149.8	-39.7%		
(import)	78.7	59.8	49.4	64.8	54.6	52.4	61.1	75.6	81.7	103.4	105.8	90.1	125.6	146.0	147.0	146.8	145.3	113.7	139.5	133.4	138.6	153.6	45.2%		
Steel/steel raw material																									
Iron ore - import (mn ton)	3.07	2.82	2.87	2.98	2.97	2.94	3.10	3.32	3.06	3.29	2.93	3.29	3.23	3.01	3.10	3.18	3.02	3.43	3.37	3.21	3.42	3.25	11.0%		
Steel products - net export (000ton)	102.15	126.90	134.03	224.29	225.53	189.74	169.68	136.43	142.32	161.27	151.65	185.75	232.52	244.90	249.19	229.87	213.87	246.52	247.43	234.55	246.37	227.84	50.2%		
(export)	139.56	159.52	165.90	250.29	251.90	215.19	198.48	166.13	167.23	186.33	174.23	206.61	254.52	264.40	269.55	250.27	235.74	267.16	268.77	256.10	266.83	249.29	43.1%		
(import)	37.41	32.61	31.87	26.00	26.37	25.45	28.81	29.70	24.90	25.07	22.58	20.86	22.00	19.50	20.35	20.40	21.87	20.65	21.33	21.55	20.47	21.45	-5.0%		
Copper, aluminum & rare earth																									
Copper ore - import (000ton)	70.76	70.45	62.80	70.61	68.67	61.26	73.23	75.77	60.29	80.40	67.84	78.56	65.19	70.10	82.48	70.83	63.71	87.00	74.70	74.52	81.43	80.03	18.0%		
All copper products - import (000ton)	16.43	16.26	15.51	15.02	17.92	14.96	16.07	17.00	13.05	18.00	16.58	14.91	13.17	13.58	14.32	14.99	14.55	15.27	16.01	16.13	18.35	14.82	-10.6%		
Unwrought aluminum and aluminum products - export (000ton)	17.52	19.17	19.90	21.83	20.25	21.04	17.43	16.53	15.46	15.19	15.21	14.92	16.05	15.39	15.33	16.42	15.80	15.81	15.71	14.20	16.32	15.82	4.0%		
Rare earth - export (000ton)	132.80	156.30	147.57	156.85	142.18	117.33	118.50	144.26	116.26	98.32	138.94	125.27	143.42	152.47	147.61	166.96	175.02	154.03	131.17	138.41	140.19	110.93	-20.2%		
Food																									
Meat - import (000ton)	18.17	19.16	19.73	19.16	20.10	20.74	21.23	21.67	20.26	22.20	22.68	22.00	21.06	19.77	19.26	22.17	21.90	20.23	19.83	17.81	18.57	18.26	-19.5%		
Cereals and cereal flour - import (mn ton)	0.42	0.39	0.45	0.51	0.44	0.40	0.36	0.38	0.24	0.36	0.44	0.45	0.39	0.40	0.56	0.51	0.44	0.41	0.38	0.34	0.48	0.59	33.3%		
Soybean - import (mn ton)	0.24	0.20	0.27	0.31	0.28	0.25	0.23	0.26	0.13	0.25	0.34	0.27	0.22	0.24	0.39	0.34	0.31	0.30	0.24	0.17	0.26	0.32	-6.9%		
Others																									
Pulp - import (000 ton)	89.2	73.6	81.8	77.9	78.4	70.2	84.0	83.4	73.2	83.1	76.2	93.4	93.7	98.9	101.8	100.7	87.8	106.1	108.8	98.5	107.6	114.5	50.3%		
Mobile phone - export (mn unit)	2.19	2.16	2.38	2.24	2.31	2.07	2.18	2.64	2.38	2.22	2.11	1.87	1.98	2.00	1.88	2.02	2.05	2.08	2.78	2.62	2.76	2.52	19.3%		

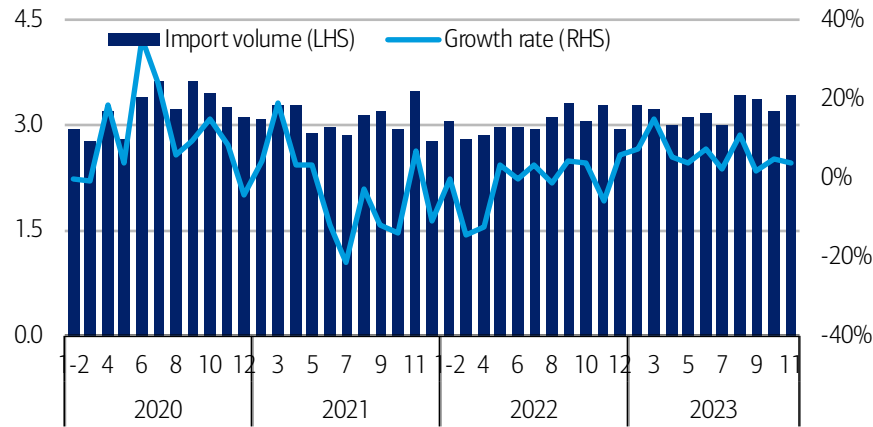
Source: China customs

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2. Steel, iron ore and coal

Exhibit 3: Iron ore import of China (Million ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: Mitsui & Co. Marubeni, Sumitomo Corp, Itochu, Mitsubishi Corp, Nippon Steel

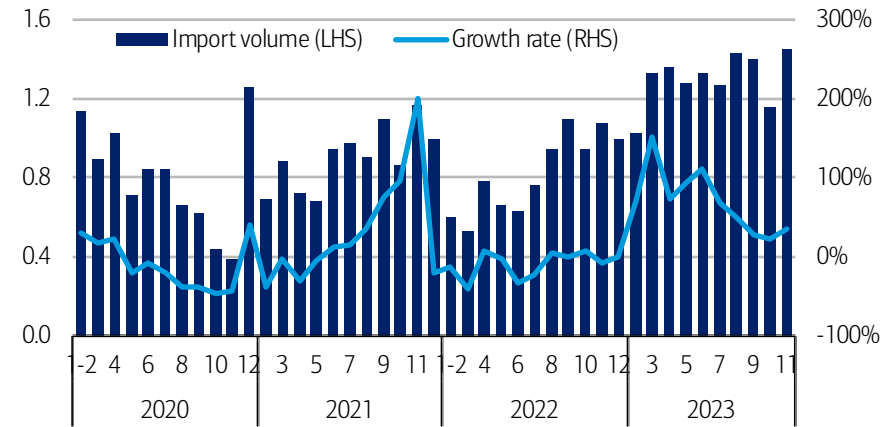


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 4: Coal import of China

Related companies: Mitsubishi Corp, Mitsui & Co, Marubeni, Sumitomo Corp, Itochu Corp, Sojitz

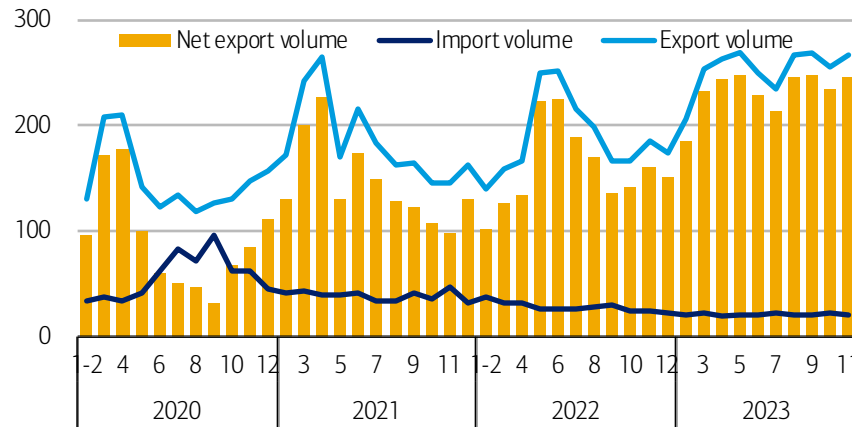


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 5: Steel trade balance of China

Related companies: Nippon Steel, JFE

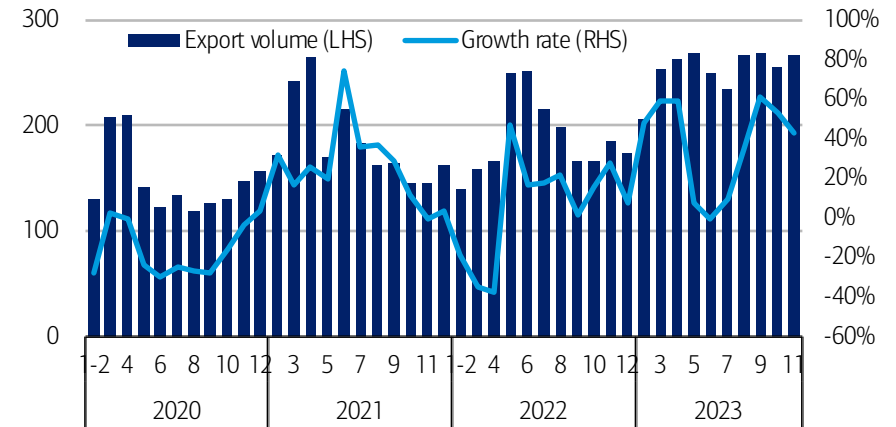


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 6: Steel export of China

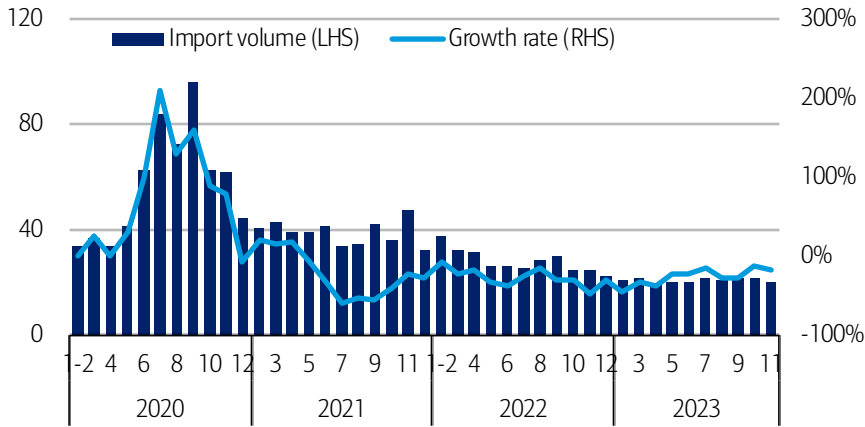
Related companies: Nippon Steel, JFE



Source: China customs

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Exhibit 7: Steel import of China
Related companies: NipponSteel, JFE



Source: China customs

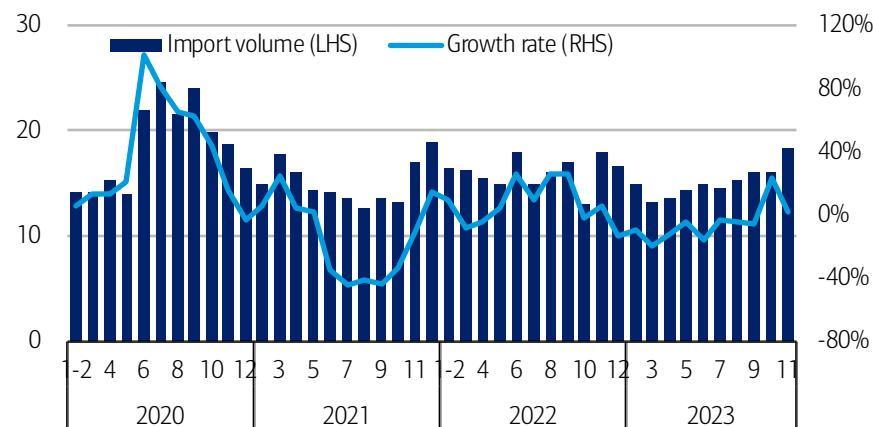
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3. Nonferrous metals and rare earth

Exhibit 8: All copper products import of China (000ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: Sumitomo Metal Mining, Mitsubishi Corp, Mitsui & Co, Marubeni, Sumitomo Corp, Mitsubishi Materials

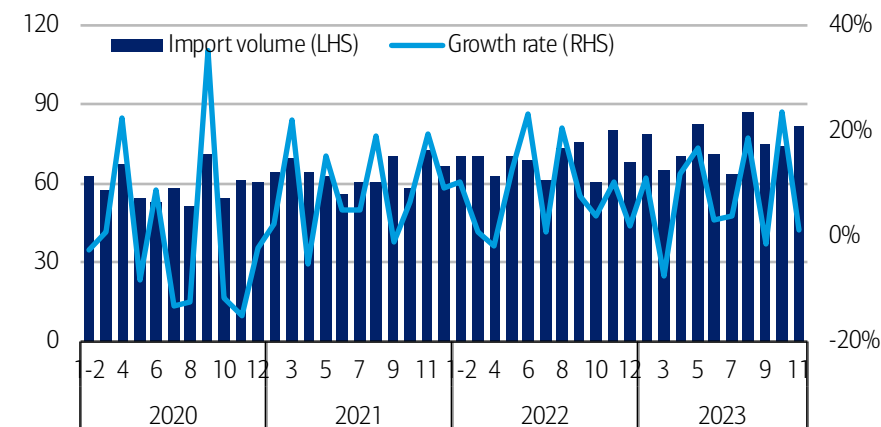


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 9: Copper ore import of China (000ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: Sumitomo Metal Mining, Mitsubishi Corp, Mitsui & Co, Marubeni, Sumitomo Corp, Mitsubishi Materials

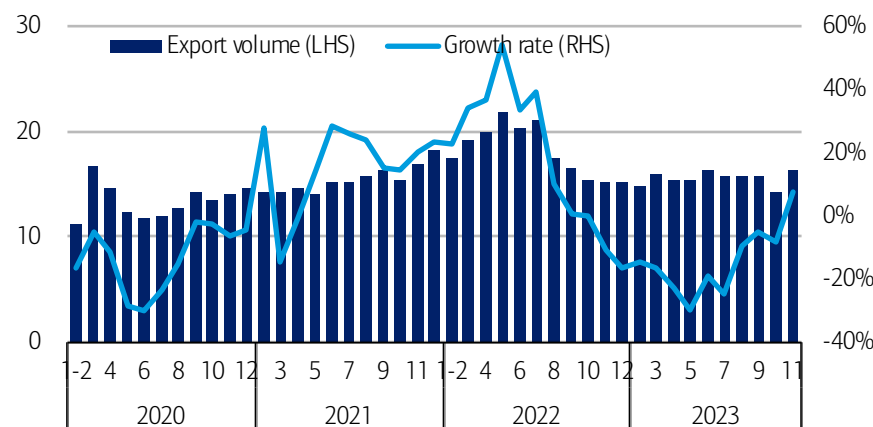


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 10: Unwrought aluminum and aluminum products export of China

Related companies: Tokai Carbon (electrode for refining)

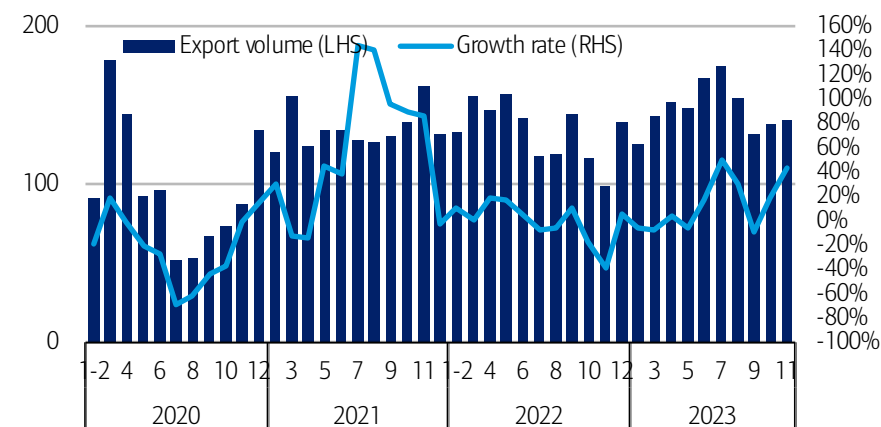


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 11: Rare earth export of China

Related companies: Shin-Etsu Chemical, Hitachi Metals, Toyota Tsusho



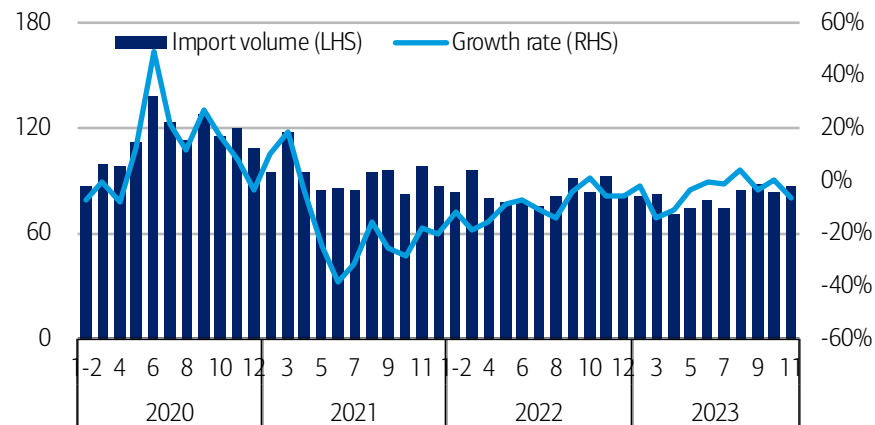
Source: China customs

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4. Petrochemicals and oil products

Exhibit 12: Primary plastic import of China (000ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: Sumitomo Chemical, Mitsui Chemicals, Itochu Corp, Marubeni, etc.

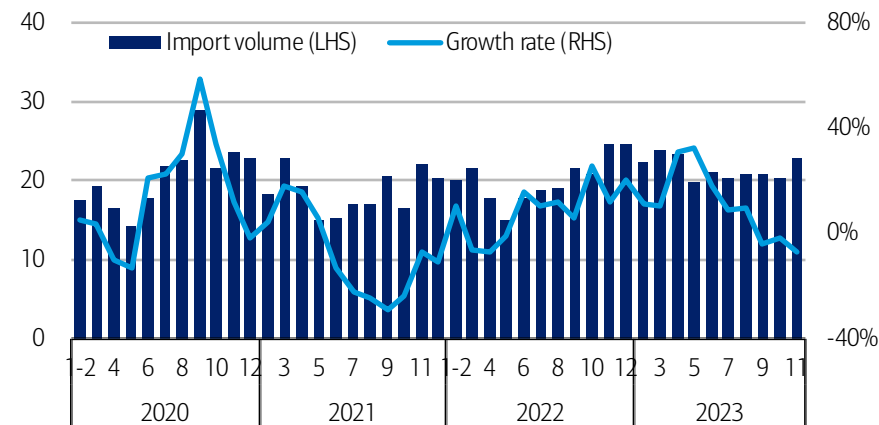


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 13: Natural & synthetic rubber import of China (000ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: JSR, Zeon, etc.

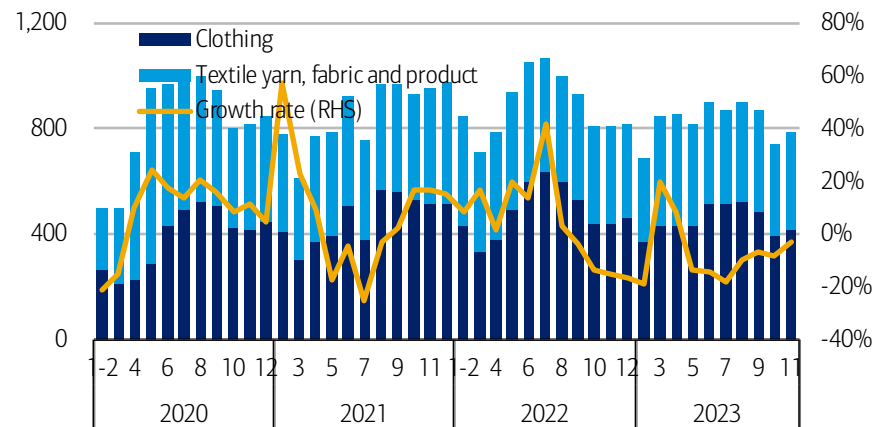


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 14: Clothing & textile yarn and fabric export of China (Million US\$/day, YoY)

Related companies: Ube Industries, Mitsubishi Chemical HD, Asahi Kasei, etc.

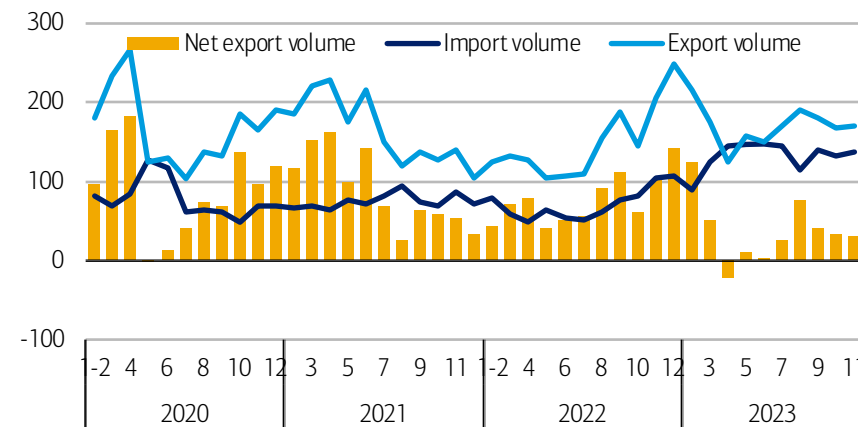


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 15: China's oil products net export (000ton/day)

Related companies: ENEOS, Idemitsu, Sumitomo Chemical, etc.

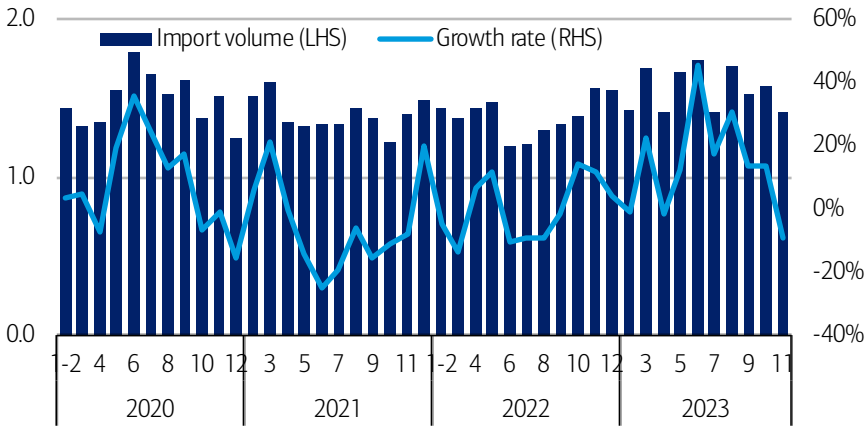


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 16: Crude oil import of China

Related companies: Mitsui & Co., Mitsubishi Corp, Sumitomo Corp, etc.

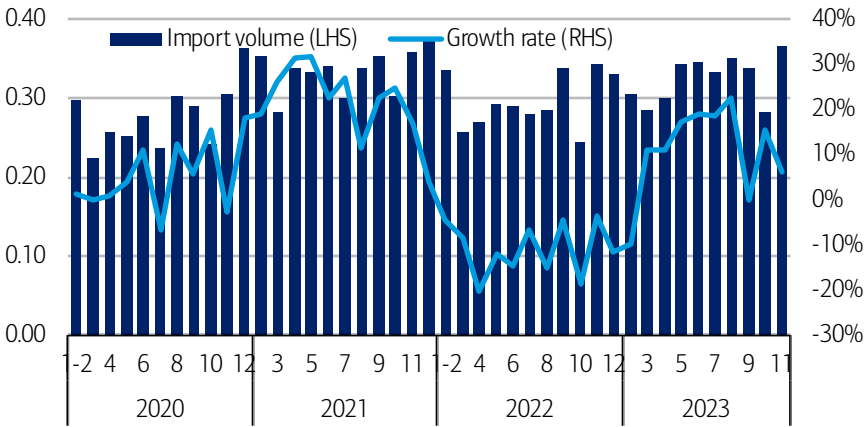


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 17: LNG/LPG import of China

Related companies: Mitsui & Co., Mitsubishi Corp, Sumitomo Corp, etc.



Source: China customs

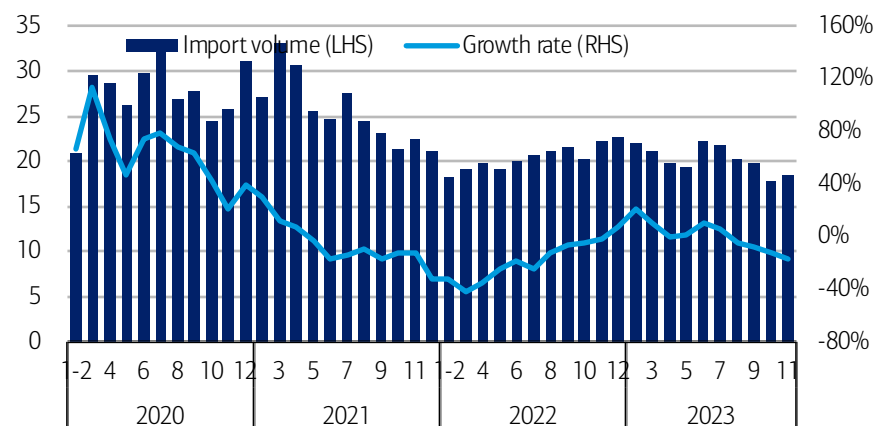
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5. Soft commodities & others

Exhibit 18: Meat import of China (000ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: Marubeni, Mitsubishi Corp, Itochu Corp

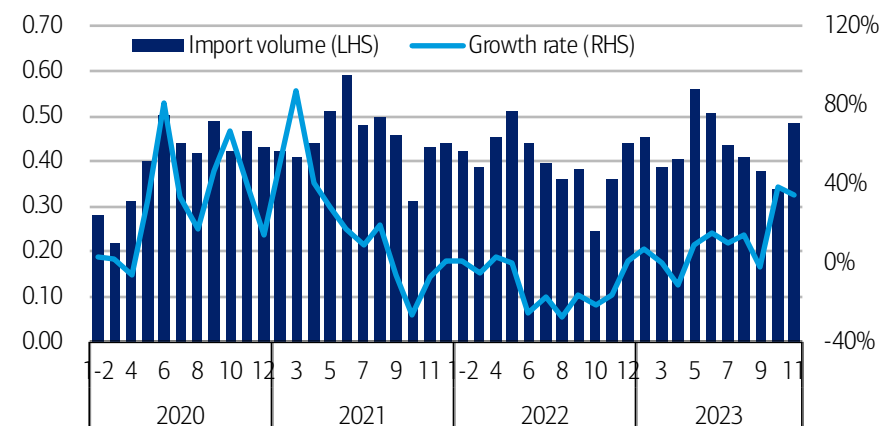


Related companies: Marubeni, Mitsubishi Corp, Itochu Corp

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Exhibit 19: Grain import of China (000ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: Marubeni, Itochu Corp

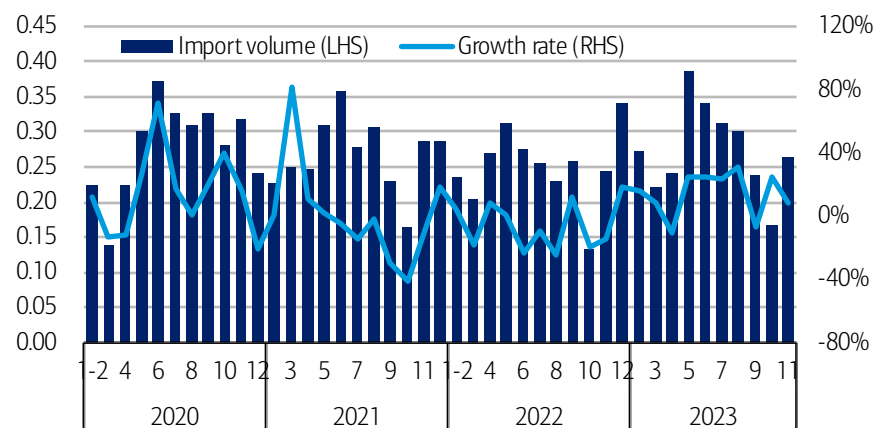


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 20: Soybean import of China (Million ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: Marubeni, Itochu Corp, Sumitomo Chemical

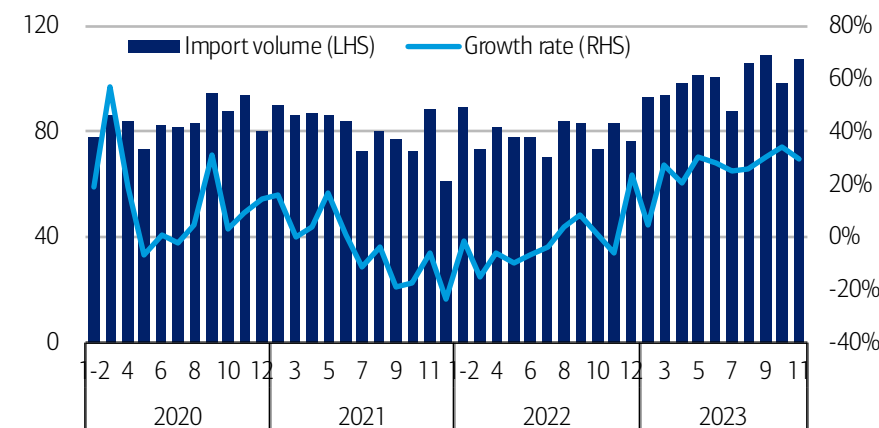


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 21: Pulp import of China (Million ton/day, YoY)

Related companies: Marubeni, Itochu Corp

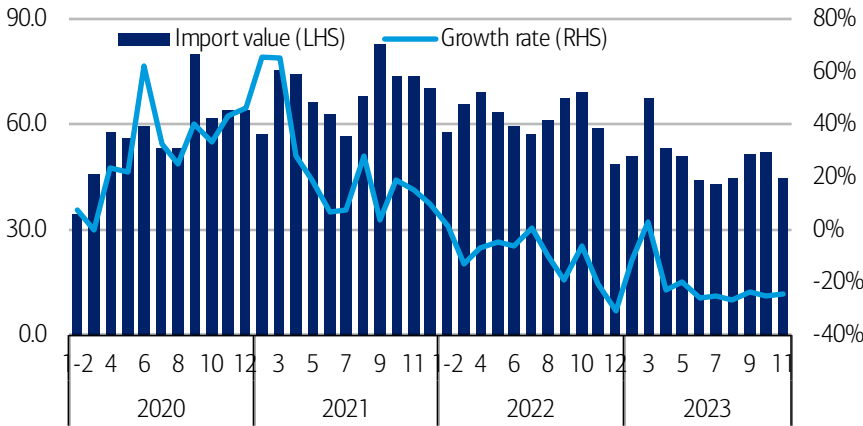


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 22: Cosmetics & toiletries import of China (Million US\$/day, YoY)

Related companies: NOF

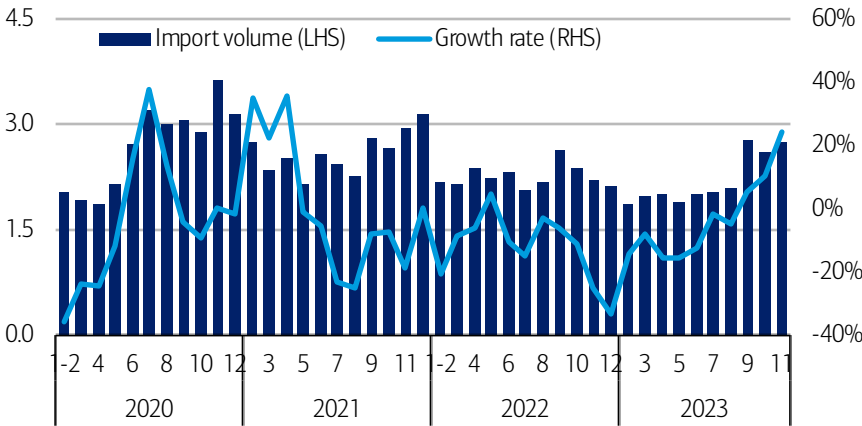


Source: China customs

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Exhibit 23: Mobile phones export of China (Million Unit/day, YoY)

Related companies: Electronic material companies



Source: China customs

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Important Disclosures

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Investment rating	Total return expectation (within 12-month period of date of initial rating)	Ratings dispersion guidelines for coverage cluster ^{R1}
Buy	≥ 10%	≤ 70%
Neutral	≥ 0%	≤ 30%
Underperform	N/A	≥ 20%

^{R1} Ratings dispersions may vary from time to time where BofA Global Research believes it better reflects the investment prospects of stocks in a Coverage Cluster.

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