

Despite End of Year Slump Vehicle Sales in Brazil Grew 14% in 2008

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Total sales of new vehicles in December 2008, in Brazil, grew 11.54% compared with November, according to figures released January 6 by the Brazilian National Federation of Motor Vehicle Distributors (Fenabrave). In December, 345,447 units were sold, as against 309,712 in the previous month.

In comparison with December 2007, when 413,143 new vehicles were sold, there was a decrease of 16.39%.

In the accumulated result for 2008, 4,849,497 units were sold, as against 4,248,275 in the previous year, growth of 14.15%. The figures include automobiles, light commercial vehicles, trucks, buses, motorcycles and highway implements.

Steel

Brazil produced 32.1 million tons of bulk steel from January to November, an increase of 4.2% when compared to the same period last year. This according to the Brazilian Steel Institute (IBS). The performance, according to the organization, reflects the strong growth of the steel market up to September.

In November alone, the country produced 2.32 million tons of bulk steel, 19.8% less than in October. According to the IBS, the reduction was due to total or partial stops at mills for scheduled maintenance services. The stops, according to the organization, were scheduled having in mind the slowing of the steel market at the end of the year.

Production of laminates grew 0.6% in the year and reached 23.8 million tons. In November, the Brazilian smelters produced 1.73 million tons, a reduction of 26% when compared to October.

A total of 20.9 million tons of ironworks products were traded on the domestic market up to November, growth of 10.6% over the same period in 2007. Sales of laminates totaled 1.4 million tons in November, 26% less than in October.

Exports, in turn, generated US\$ 6.82 billion from January to September, growth of 22.5% over the same period last year. According to the IBS, revenues show the heated demand in the first months of 2008. In terms of volume, however, shipments dropped 10,5% in the year and totaled 7.94 million tons.