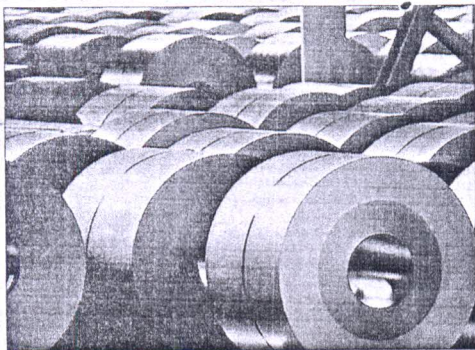


# Producers of stainless steel clash with end users over imports



**New Delhi, Oct 18:** After clashing with each other on Stainless Steel Quality Control (QC) Order, stainless steel producers and end users have now locked swords over imports of the metal.

Earlier this month, producers body Indian Stainless Steel Development Association (ISSDA) said imports of stainless steel, mainly used in making utensils and kitchen appliances, rose 25% in first five months of this fiscal to 2.3 lakh tonnes (LT) against 1.84 LT in the April-August period of 2015-16 fiscal.

However, end user body Process Plant and Machinery Association of India (PPMAI) claimed that figures provided by ISSDA are "incorrect" and the inbound shipments have declined by "over 50% in January-August period this calendar year".

To which ISSDA said PPMAI is indulging in a "malicious campaign", which is based on "concocted and incorrect" data to meet their "vested interests".

PPMAI said ISSDA has "allegedly claimed" that stainless steel flat products imports had surged by 25% year-on-year in the first five months of 2016-17.

"Such misleading figures released by ISSDA to media and government agencies are aimed for demanding protectionist measures against stainless steel imports," PPMAI secretary V P Ramachandran said in a statement to PTI.

He further said: "It is unfortunate that ISSDA is indulging more in lobbying for protectionism than development of new age stainless steel applications in demand in India."

Hitting back, ISSDA said

based on the research agency data quoted by PPMAI, imports of stainless steel flat products in the period between January to August has gone up substantially by 21% from 2,93,884 tonnes in 2015 to 3,55,624 tonnes in the same period this year.

"This is exactly the opposite of what PPMAI is trying to spread through blatant use of incorrect data purportedly collected from Cybex.

"We would request the concerned stakeholders to check with the independent agency on the veracity of the data which will expose the mischievous intent of PPMAI to confuse the consumers and the public in general," it said in a statement.

The surge in stainless steel imports is also documented by the government through figures released by the ministry of commerce for the period between April to July 2016 which PPMAI has ignored despite it being the most authentic and comprehensive data which is available, ISSDA said.

In August too, ISSDA and PPMAI had indulged in a bitter war of words over Stainless Steel QC Order, 2016. Following the clash, the government last month extended the window for registration under the QC Order by three months.

The Order relates to manufacture, import, storage, sale and distribution of stainless steel products by trade and industry without such registration.

While PPMAI claimed that the Order has been implemented without discussions with end users, ISSDA shot back saying "unethical vested interests" are running an agenda against the QC Order.

PTI