Japanese Automakers' China Output Tumbles

The Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Chinese vehicle production from Toyota and other major Japanese automakers tumbled in October amid a territorial dispute between the two Asian powers that led to boycotts of Japanese products in China.

Toyota Motor Corp. said Thursday that its Chinese output plunged 61 percent to 30,591 vehicles, its third straight monthly decline.

"We have adjusted the production to meet the current level of demand in China," said Dion Corbett, spokesman for Toyota. He declined to comment further on the reason.

Chinese output of Nissan Motor Co. sank 44 percent to 61,360 vehicles, while production from Honda Motor Co. declined 54 percent to 26,302 vehicles, the companies said.

Sales of Japanese automobiles have plunged in China since the Japanese government in September nationalized a cluster of tiny, uninhabited islands in the East China Sea called Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China that are controlled by Tokyo but also claimed by Beijing.

The purchase set off violent demonstrations in China and a call to boycott Japanese goods. Toyota and Honda dealerships were burned down in one city, and crowds shouting anti-Japanese slogans have gathered and smashed Japanese cars.

The protests have mostly subsided, but Chinese consumers appear to be shunning Japanese products.

Toyota's total overseas production rose 12.9 percent in October from a year ago to 430,041 vehicles.

Its global output during the month dipped just 0.3 percent to 695,083 vehicles. Including subsidiaries Daihatsu Motor Co., which makes mostly small cars, and truck maker Hino Motors Ltd., global production slipped 0.3 percent to 787,476, the company said.

Nissan's global output in October declined 4.8 percent to 410,961 vehicles.

Honda's worldwide production during the month rose 9.4 percent to 346,129 vehicles.

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