

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN MAY 2020

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in May 2020 was 54% less than that imported in May 2019. For the first 5 months of 2020, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was 9% less than that imported during the same period in 2019 (table 2). The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals in May 2020 was 7% less than that exported in May 2019 and during the first 5 months of 2020, the amount exported was 20% less than that exported during the same period in 2019 (table 4).

following listed prices are for cobalt metal in May, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	15.10–15.60	15.35
LME cash mean ²	13.38–13.38	13.38

¹Source: Platts Metals Week, minimum 99.8% cobalt cathode.

²London Metal Exchange, mean of the cash buyer and cash seller price, minimum 99.3% cobalt briquettes, cathode, ingot, or rounds (converted from dollars per metric ton and rounded to the nearest cent).

Prices

In May, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price was slightly lower than that in April and that in May 2019. The monthly average LME cash mean price in May was unchanged from that in April and 14% lower than that in May 2019. The

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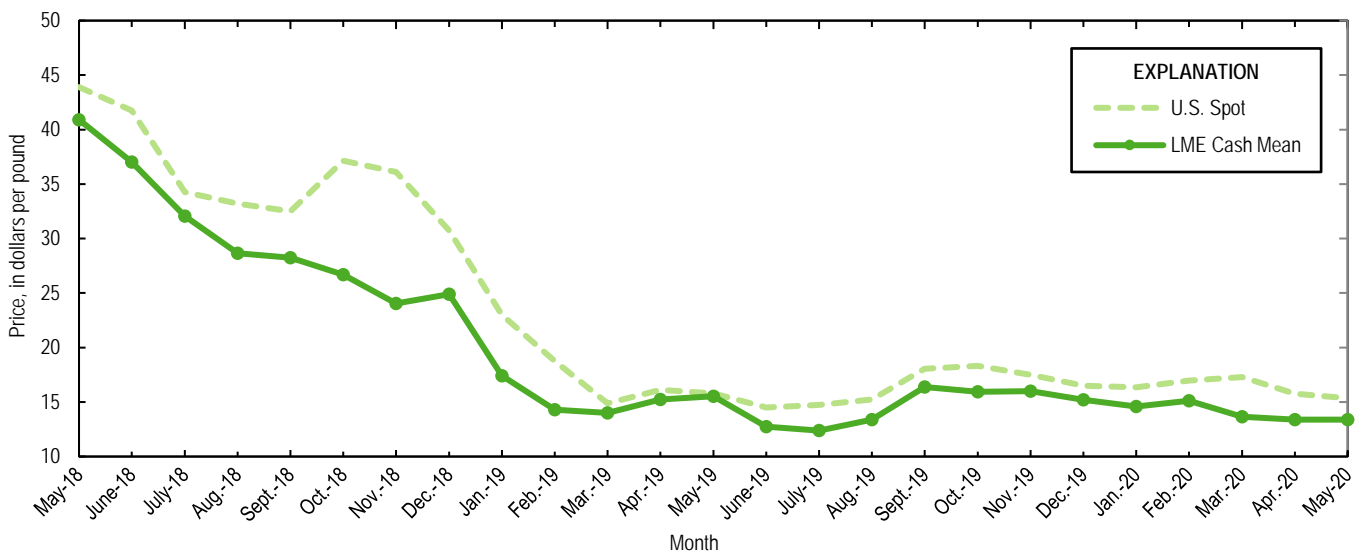


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for May 2018 through May 2020. Sources: Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.

TABLE 1
 REPORTED STOCKS OF COBALT METAL, END OF PERIOD

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	U.S. Government ²	LME ¹		Total
		U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
2019:				
May	302	200	661	861
June	302	200	659	859
July	302	191	649	840
August	302	191	645	836
September	302	191	643	834
October	302	111	600	711
November	302	111	576	687
December	302	102	583	685
2020:				
January	302	95	555	650
February	302	94	551	645
March	302	92	551	643
April	302	91	513	604
May	302	89	513	602

¹London Metal Exchange.

²Data from Defense Logistics Agency Strategic Materials.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF COBALT, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

Period and country or locality of origin	Metals ²		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds ³		Total cobalt content for the period ⁵ (metric tons)	Cobalt content, year to date ^{5,6} (metric tons)
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
2019:								
May	1,220	\$43,000	190	\$4,740	286	\$2,880	1,440	6,310
June	558	17,800	123	3,000	141	1,190	687	7,000
July	1,030	33,900	181	4,350	115	1,580	1,200	8,200
August	674	20,100	119	2,670	88	1,120	790	8,990
September	1,420	48,300	123	3,110	191	1,930	1,570	10,600
October	779	27,800	198	5,150	152	1,640	973	11,500
November	829	29,600	167	4,600	231	3,110	1,030	12,600
December	1,210	42,500	102	2,740	103	1,370	1,320	13,900
January–May ^f	5,450	233,000	695	18,700	1,090	15,900	6,310	XX
January–December	11,900	453,000	1,710	44,300	2,110	27,900	13,900	XX
2020:								
January	1,670	62,300	141	3,560	147	1,330	1,820	1,820
February	803	27,300	112	2,850	76	768	906	2,720
March	1,080	40,600	160	3,810	203	2,360	1,260	3,980
April	927	32,200	103	2,780	279	2,880	1,090	5,070
May:								
Australia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	729
Belgium	--	--	56	1,610	--	--	40	136
Brazil	--	--	--	--	17	284	6	42
Canada	159	4,540	--	--	--	--	159	862
China	2	87	--	--	13	184	7	61
Finland	46	1,790	49	1,250	264	3,350	176	510
Germany	3	139	--	--	--	--	3	18
Japan	112	3,960	--	--	--	--	112	798
Korea, Republic of	--	--	6	100	--	--	4	19
Madagascar	42	1,480	--	--	--	--	42	355
Mexico	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	40
Morocco	20	688	--	--	--	--	20	120
Netherlands	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	14
Norway	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,340
Russia	66	2,140	--	--	--	--	66	413
South Africa	9	105	--	--	--	--	9	64
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	20	150	5	38
United Kingdom	(7)	16	18	355	3	44	14	175
Other	1	56	--	--	(7)	3	1	6
Total	459	15,000	128	3,310	317	4,010	665	5,740
January–May	4,940	177,000	644	16,300	1,020	11,300	5,740	XX

¹Revised. XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

³Unwrought cobalt, excluding alloys; includes cobalt cathode and cobalt metal powder; may include intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy.

⁴Includes cobalt acetates, cobalt carbonates, cobalt chlorides, and cobalt sulfates.

⁵Customs value.

⁶Estimated from gross weights.

⁷May include revisions to previously published data.

⁸Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ADDITIONAL COBALT MATERIALS, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

Period and country or locality of origin	Unwrought cobalt alloys		Cobalt waste and scrap		Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)
2019:						
May	18	\$1,140	156	\$3,360	41	\$4,540
June	21	1,550	145	1,460	47	4,480
July	34	2,430	223	2,420	55	4,640
August	39	2,470	171	2,440	23	3,180
September	22	1,510	155	1,880	41	4,150
October	16	875	158	2,130	47	4,980
November	21	1,240	192	2,950	43	4,480
December	40	2,280	152	2,170	52	5,320
January–May ^f	175	11,200	901	13,500	183	22,600
January–December	369	23,600	2,100	28,900	491	53,800
2020:						
January	12	738	180	1,620	37	4,360
February	36	1,650	69	769	30	3,570
March	40	1,890	248	2,240	49	5,880
April	49	2,570	167	1,830	31	4,230
May:						
Belgium	2	62	10	231	(3)	2
Canada	--	--	9	89	2	690
France	--	--	13	87	2	598
Germany	--	--	6	6	1	336
Ireland	--	--	41	65	--	--
Japan	--	--	7	67	(3)	11
Tunisia	--	--	7	67	--	--
United Kingdom	28	1,330	51	1,010	13	1,240
Other	--	--	2	17	4	786
Total	30	1,390	146	1,640	22	3,660
January–May	168	8,240	809	8,090	170	21,700

^fRevised. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Customs value.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. EXPORTS OF COBALT MATERIALS¹

Period	Unwrought cobalt, powders, matte, waste and scrap ²		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds ³		Total cobalt content for the period ⁵ (metric tons)	Cobalt content, year to date ^{5,6} (metric tons)
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
2019:								
May	285	\$9,430	3	\$74	46	\$287	299	1,970
June	286	10,300	7	90	10	208	294	2,270
July	214	8,870	44	658	19	170	250	2,520
August	398	10,700	4	115	--	--	401	2,920
September	248	8,830	2	55	26	316	256	3,170
October	260	9,650	5	215	38	487	272	3,450
November	267	8,330	(7)	13	--	--	267	3,710
December	361	11,000	1	25	(7)	4	361	4,070
January–May	1,940 ^r	60,500 ^r	16	540	110	1,190	1,970 ^r	XX
January–December	3,970	128,000	79	1,710	203	2,370	4,070	XX
2020:								
January	335	11,900	8	326	32	93	349	349
February	301	8,930	14	489	3	39	311	660
March	248	8,320	7	249	65	292	268	928
April	351	8,700	3	109	39	340	363	1,290
May	260	9,310	9	380	51	2,060	279	1,570
January–May	1,500	47,200	41	1,550	190	2,830	1,570	XX

^rRevised. XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²May include other intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy and unwrought cobalt alloys.

³Cobalt acetates and cobalt chlorides.

⁴Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

⁵Estimated from gross weights.

⁶May include revisions to previously published data.

⁷Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
U.S. EXPORTS OF WROUGHT COBALT, COBALT ORE,
AND CONCENTRATES¹

Period	Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles		Cobalt ore and concentrates	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)
2019:				
May	117	\$12,600	(3)	\$6
June	109	11,400	(3)	5
July	102	11,300	--	--
August	127	13,700	--	--
September	141	12,600	(3)	10
October	229	17,200	(3)	4
November	242	18,700	--	--
December	208	16,700	77	211
January–May	586	62,700	24	373 [†]
January–December	1,750	164,000	102	603
2020:				
January	107	11,800	150	515
February	128	14,900	--	--
March	123	13,700	--	--
April	100	10,600	(3)	6
May	109	11,500	--	--
January–May	567	62,600	150	521

[†]Revised. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.