

Mineral Industry Surveys

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SULFUR IN MAY 2020

During May 2020, production of recovered elemental sulfur was 595,000 metric tons (t), which was slightly lower than that of April 2020 and 7% lower than that of May 2019. Total production for January through May was 3.25 million metric tons (Mt), which was slightly lower than that in the same period of 2019. Shipments were 592,000 t, which was slightly lower than those of April 2020. Total shipments for January through May were 3.26 Mt, which was slightly lower than those in the same period of 2019. Producers' ending stocks for May 2020 were estimated to be 120,000 t (table 1).

Imports of recovered sulfur for May 2020 were estimated to be 121,000 t; exports were 136,000 t. Total imports of recovered sulfur for January through May were 786,000 t, which was 5% lower than those in the same period of 2019. Total exports for January through May of recovered sulfur were 720,000 t, which was 24% lower than those in the same period of 2019 (tables 2, 4).

Imports of sulfuric acid for May 2020 were 332,000 t; exports were 17,000 t. Total imports for January through May were 1.54

Mt, which was 23% higher than those in the same period of 2019. Total exports for January through May of sulfuric acid were 92,000 t, which was 3% higher than those in the same period of 2019 (tables 3, 4).

U.S. sulfur consumption, calculated as shipments minus exports plus imports, was 577,000 t in May 2020. This was 19% lower than that of April 2020 and slightly higher than that of May 2019. Total consumption for January through May was 3.33 Mt, which was 4% higher than that in the same period of 2019 (table 5).

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TABLE 1
SALIENT SULFUR STATISTICS¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Production			Shipments, all sources	Stocks, end of period ³
	Petroleum ²	Natural gas	Total		
2019:					
January–December	7,790	322	8,110	8,100	124
January–May	3,190 ^r	131 ^r	3,320 ^r	3,330 ^r	107 ^r
May	621	21	642	640	107
June	624	28	652	647	113
July	690	30	720	725	107
August	677	25	703	699	111
September	620	25	644	641	114
October	611	28	639	643	109
November	658	27	685	676	119
December	721	29	749	744	124
2020:					
January	701	28	729	742	111
February	628	25	653	645	120
March	642	27	669	688	120
April	578	24	602	593	120
May ^p	574	22	595	592	120 ^e
January–May	3,120	126	3,250	3,260	120 ^e

^eEstimated. ^pPreliminary. ^rRevised.

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

²Includes a small quantity from coking operations.

³Subject to inventory adjustments.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS OF SULFUR¹

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Canada		Total, all countries ²	
	Quantity	Value ³	Quantity	Value ³
2019:				
January–December	1,450	65,900	1,850	137,000
January–May	635 ^r	38,300	828 ^r	72,400
May	119	6,180	120	7,060
June	108	4,970	207	16,200
July	126	6,730	132	13,000
August	109	4,000	152	9,380
September	97	3,470	99	4,460
October	124	3,360	178	14,500
November	119	2,790	121	3,860
December	127	2,230	129	3,270
2020:				
January	127	2,970	129	4,190
February	104	3,200	143	7,580
March	131	4,710	183	9,320
April	120 ^{r,e}	5,150	210 ^{r,e}	13,700
May	120 ^e	8,230	121 ^e	8,700
January–May	602 ^e	24,300	786 ^e	43,500

^eEstimated. ^rRevised..

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

²May include other countries not listed.

³Declared customs valuation.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau as adjusted by U.S. Geological Survey and Acuity Commodities.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS OF SULFURIC ACID¹

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Canada			Mexico			Total, all countries ²		
	Quantity	Sulfur content	Value ³	Quantity	Sulfur content	Value ³	Quantity	Sulfur content	Value ³
2019:									
January–December	1,920	628	149,000	485	159	29,700	2,970	971	240,000
January–May	772	252	58,300	230	75	14,500	1,260	410	101,000
May	175	57	19,100	23	8	2,310	233	76	25,700
June	151	49	15,600	24	8	1,810	237	77	23,300
July	178	58	14,200	34	11	2,140	251	82	21,700
August	190	62	13,300	29	9	1,800	262	86	20,500
September	156	51	11,000	38	12	2,290	198	65	15,200
October	185	60	14,400	37	12	1,990	320	105	24,300
November	109	36	8,110	34	11	1,900	166	54	13,200
December	180	59	13,700	59	19	3,320	281	92	21,200
2020:									
January	150	49	11,200	58	19	4,670	306	100	23,400
February	147	48	10,500	51	17	4,350	311	102	21,600
March	178	58	12,700	51	17	4,390	310	101	22,500
April	154	50	11,300	50	16	4,980	284	93	22,100
May	193	63	13,900	43	14	3,700	332	109	22,100
January–May	821	268	59,500	253	83	22,100	1,540	505	112,000

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

²May include other countries not listed.

³Declared customs valuation.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. EXPORTS OF SULFUR AND SULFURIC ACID¹

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Sulfur		Sulfuric acid		
	Quantity	Value ²	Quantity	Sulfur content	Value ²
2019:					
January–December	2,200	172,000	220	72	31,200
January–May	945 ^r	270,000 ^r	89	29	15,700
May	184	19,400	21	7	2,910
June	156	13,900	18	6	1,920
July	121	12,500	15	5	2,890
August	296	13,100	17	6	2,630
September	148	10,800	18	6	2,520
October	321	8,860	28	9	2,310
November	53	4,750	11	4	1,530
December	157	11,200	25	8	1,650
2020:					
January	97	4,720	16	5	2,650
February	190	10,100	10	3	2,240
March	210	14,100	18	6	3,420
April	87	7,520	31	10	2,350
May	136	9,040	17	6	2,780
January–May	720	45,400	92	30	13,400

^rRevised.

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

²Declared f.a.s. (free alongside ship) valuation.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
U.S. CONSUMPTION OF SULFUR¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Domestic sources ²	Imports	Consumption
2019:			
January–December	5,900	1,850	7,750
January–May	2,380 ^r	828 ^r	3,210 ^r
May	456	120	576
June	491	207	698
July	604	132	736
August	403	152	555
September	493	99	592
October	322	178	500
November	623	121	744
December	587	129	716
2020:			
January	645	129	774
February	455	143	598
March	478	183	661
April	506	210 ^r	716 ^r
May ^p	456	121	577
January–May	2,540	786	3,330

^pPreliminary. ^rRevised.

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

²Calculated as shipments minus exports.

TABLE 6
RECOVERED SULFUR PRODUCED AND SHIPPED IN THE UNITED STATES,
BY PAD (PETROLEUM ADMINISTRATION FOR DEFENSE) DISTRICT¹

(Thousand metric tons)

District and source	January–May 2019 ²		April 2020		May 2020 ^p		January–May 2020 ^{p, 2}	
	Production	Shipments	Production	Shipments	Production	Shipments	Production	Shipments
PAD 1:								
Petroleum and coke	65	66	13	14	13	13	84	84
Natural gas	5	5	1	1	1	1	5	5
Total	71	72	14	15	14	14	90	89
PAD 2:								
Petroleum and coke	524	525	100	99	89	86	552	551
Natural gas	2	1	--	1	--	--	--	1
Total	526	526	100	99	89	86	552	552
PAD 3:								
Petroleum and coke	2,000	2,000	368	356	374	383	1,920	1,930
Natural gas	50	50	9	10	10	9	47	47
Total	2,050	2,050	377	366	383	392	1,970	1,980
PAD 4 and 5:								
Petroleum and coke	604	609	97	99	98	92	565	569
Natural gas	73	74	14	14	11	8	74	71
Total	677	683	111	113	109	100	639	640
Grand total	3,320	3,330	602	593	595	592	3,250	3,260

^pPreliminary. -- Zero.

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

²May include revisions to previously published data.

TABLE 7
COMPARATIVE SULFUR AND SULFURIC ACID STATISTICS¹

(Million metric tons per year [annualized basis] and dollars per metric ton for period shown)

	2019	2020		
		April	May	January– May
Production	8.11	7.34	7.02 ^P	7.82
Shipments	8.10	7.23	6.99 ^P	7.85
Exports of sulfur	2.20	1.06	1.61	1.73
Imports of sulfur:				
Canada	1.45	1.46 ^r	1.42	1.45
Total ²	1.85	2.56 ^r	1.43	1.89
Exports of H ₂ SO ₄	0.22	0.38	0.20	0.22
Imports of H ₂ SO ₄ :				
Canada	1.92	1.88	2.28	1.98
Mexico	0.49	0.61	0.51	0.61
Total ²	2.97	3.46	3.92	3.72
Consumption:				
Domestic sources	5.90	6.17	5.38	6.12
Imports	1.85	2.56 ^r	1.43	1.89
Total	7.75	8.74 ^r	6.81	8.01
Sulfur export values ³	78	86	66	63
Sulfur import values: ³				
Canada	46	43 ^r	69	40
Average ³	74	65 ^r	72	55
H ₂ SO ₄ export values ³	142	76	164	146
H ₂ SO ₄ import values: ³				
Canada	77	73	72	73
Mexico	61	100	86	87
Average ²	81	78	67	72

^PPreliminary. ^rRevised.

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

²Includes other countries not listed.

³Average value per ton.