

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN AUGUST 2020

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in August 2020 was 32% less than that imported in August 2019. For the first 8 months of 2020, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was 15% 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 August 2020 was 30% less than that exported in August 2019 and during the first 8 months of 2020, the amount exported was 13% less than that exported during the same period in 2019 (table 4).

was 12% higher than that in August 2019. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in August, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	14.50–15.65	15.21
LME cash mean ²	13.70–15.01	14.93

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 August, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price increased by 9% from that in July and was essentially unchanged from that in August 2019. The monthly average LME cash mean price increased by 15% from that in July and

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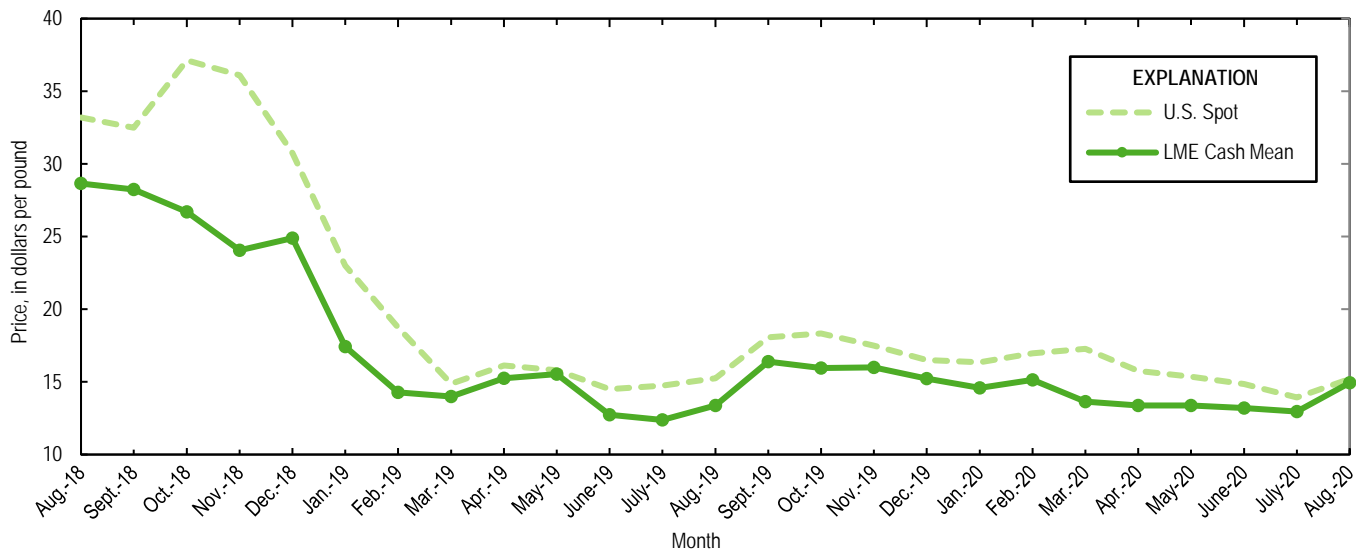


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for August 2018 through August 2020. Sources: Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.

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:				
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
June	302	89	513	602
July	302	82	513	595
August	302	82	373	455

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:								
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–August	7,710 ^r	305,000 ^r	1,120 ^r	28,700 ^r	1,430 ^r	19,800 ^r	8,990 ^r	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	459	15,000	128	3,310	317	4,010	665	5,740
June	446	13,400	60	1,460	164	1,770	539	6,280
July	725	22,800	103	2,530	112	1,410	838	7,120
August:								
Australia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	729
Belgium	(7)	2	10	221	--	--	7	174
Brazil	--	--	--	--	5	75	2	51
Canada	145	4,350	--	--	--	--	145	1,370
China	--	--	(7)	8	--	--	(7)	90
Finland	11	557	19	486	160	2,110	86	788
France	1	72	--	--	--	--	1	6
Germany	3	136	(7)	5	--	--	3	30
Japan	71	2,360	--	--	--	--	71	1,080
Korea, Republic of	(7)	3	--	--	--	--	(7)	25
Madagascar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	397
Mexico	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	61
Morocco	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	212
Netherlands	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	14
Norway	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,550
Russia	169	5,190	--	--	--	--	169	671
South Africa	48	360	--	--	--	--	48	148
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	38
United Kingdom	1	66	--	--	3	38	2	218
Other	--	--	(7)	17	--	--	(7)	6
Total	450	13,100	30	737	168	2,220	536	7,650
January–August	6,560	227,000	837	21,000	1,470	16,700	7,650	XX

^rRevised. XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

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

²Unwrought cobalt, excluding alloys; includes cobalt cathode and cobalt metal powder; may include intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy.

³Includes cobalt acetates, cobalt carbonates, cobalt chlorides, and cobalt sulfates.

⁴Customs value.

⁵Estimated from gross weights.

⁶May include revisions to previously published data.

⁷Less 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:						
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–August	269 ^r	17,700 ^r	1,440	19,800 ^r	308 ^r	34,900
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	30	1,390	146	1,640	22	3,660
June	3	146	65	288	20	3,230
July	10	460	88	1,250	21	3,430
August:						
Belgium	10	347	3	73	(3)	3
France	--	--	11	264	5	456
Ireland	--	--	37	126	(3)	5
Japan	--	--	18	185	1	42
Netherlands	--	--	4	53	--	--
Singapore	--	--	20	290	--	--
Switzerland	--	--	3	4	--	--
Taiwan	--	--	6	232	(3)	63
United Kingdom	2	87	23	549	4	437
Other	1	38	3	27	3	1,140
Total	12	472	128	1,800	14	2,150
January–August	193	9,320	1,090	11,400	225	30,500

^rRevised. -- 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:								
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–August	2,830 ^r	90,300 ^r	72	1,400	139	1,560	2,920 ^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
June	398	8,350	8	329	29	174	411	1,980
July	248	7,250	8	230	59	266	268	2,250
August	271	6,610	11	262	9	23	281	2,530
January–August	2,410	69,400	68	2,370	287	3,290	2,530	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:				
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–August	925	99,100 ^r	24	378
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	--	--
June	97	11,000	--	--
July	96	11,200	--	--
August	100	9,650	--	--
January–August	860	94,500	150	521

^rRevised. -- 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.