

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

Ruth F. Schulte, Chromium Commodity Specialist
 National Minerals Information Center
 U.S. Geological Survey
 989 National Center
 Reston, VA 20192
 Telephone: (703) 648-4963, Fax: (703) 648-7757
 Email: rschulte@usgs.gov

Benjamin N. Bryden (Data)
 Telephone: (703) 648-7953
 Fax: (703) 648-7975
 Email: bbryden@usgs.gov

Internet: <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic>

CHROMIUM IN SEPTEMBER 2021

Reported consumption of chromium, on a gross weight basis, in September 2021 was essentially unchanged compared with consumption of chromium in August 2021 and essentially unchanged compared with consumption in September 2020. Reported consumer stocks were essentially unchanged compared with stocks in August 2021 and increased by 10% compared with those of September 2020 (tables 1, 2).

Stainless steel production decreased by 3% in September 2021 compared with production in August 2021 and decreased by 3% compared with production in September 2020 (table 1). Year-to-date production through September 2021 increased by 16% compared with year-to-date production through

September 2020. Government stockpile inventories for chromium metal were unchanged compared with those in August 2021 and decreased by 6% compared with those in September 2020. Government stockpile inventories of chromium ferroalloys were slightly less compared with those in August 2021 and decreased by 13% compared with those of September 2020 (table 3).

Imports of chromite ore, chromium ferroalloys, stainless steel, and stainless steel scrap commonly fluctuate from month to month (fig. 1, table 1). In September 2021, imports of all grades of chromium ferroalloys, including ferrochromium silicon, increased by 23% compared with imports of chromium ferroalloys in August 2021 and increased more than

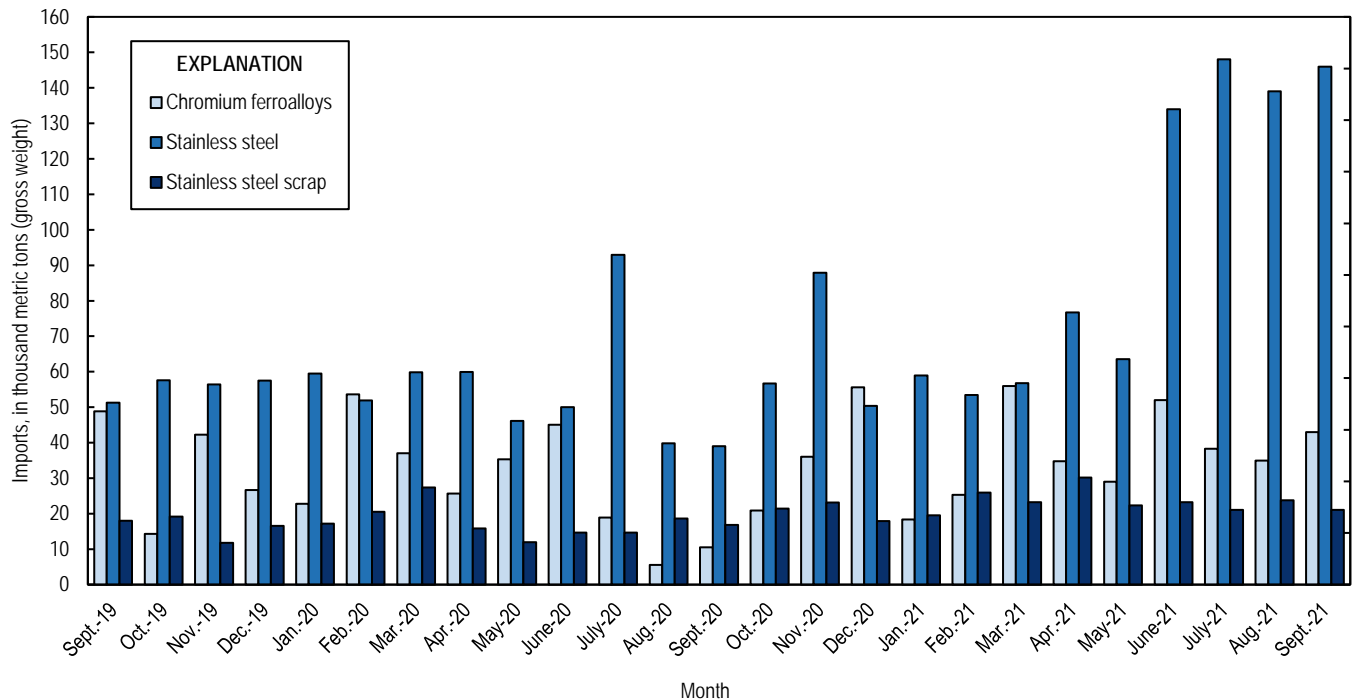


Figure 1. Chromium ferroalloys, stainless steel, and stainless steel scrap imports from September 2019 through September 2021. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

fourfold compared with those in in September 2020.

Stainless steel imports in September 2021 increased by 5% compared with imports in August 2021 and more than tripled compared with imports in September 2020. Stainless steel scrap imports decreased by 11% in September 2021 compared with imports in August 2021 and increased by 25% compared with those in September 2020 (table 1).

In September 2021, the leading import sources for ferrochromium (FeCr) into the United States were, in descending order of quantity by gross weight, South Africa, Kazakhstan, and Finland (table 6), whereas the leading import sources for chromium metal were Russia, the United Kingdom, and China (table 7).

Exports of chromite ore, chromium ferroalloys, chromium metal, and stainless steel also frequently fluctuate from month to month (table 1, table 4). Exports of chromium ferroalloys decreased by 19% in September 2021 compared with exports in August 2021 and increased by 71% compared with exports in September 2020. Stainless steel exports in September 2021 increased by 8% compared with exports in August 2021 and increased by 11% compared with those of September 2020 (table 1).

The U.S. chromium metal (99% Cr) average price was \$5.11 per pound in September 2021, a 3% increase from the average price in August 2021, and a 68% increase compared with the average price in September 2020. The U.S. high-carbon FeCr (62%–70% chromium) average price was 173.72 cents per pound of contained chromium in September 2021, a 5% increase from the average price in August 2021, and a 90% increase from the average price in September 2020 (fig. 2) (CRU Group, 2021).

Industry News

Zimasco (Pvt) Ltd, a subsidiary of Sinosteel Corporation (China), invested \$35 million dollars to construct new ferrochromium furnaces at its ferrochromium smelting complex in Kwekwe, Zimbabwe. The additional furnaces would increase production capacity by 40% to 252,000 metric

tons per year (t/y). A new sinter plant would also be added to the complex, with a capacity of 300,000 t/y, and would allow Zimasco to use friable ores during the smelting process (Sebetlela, 2021).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fined Owens-Brockway Glass Container, Inc. \$38,900 for failing to report its use of chromium chemicals at its Portland facility in 2017 and 2018 (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2021). Under the Toxic Release Inventory rules of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, a company must report its chemical releases and transfers with the EPA and pertinent state agency when certain toxic chemicals like chromium (VI) chemicals exceed threshold amounts.

References Cited

- CRU Group, 2021, CRU prices: CRU Group, October 1. (Accessed November 12, 2021, via <http://www.crugroup.com/>.)
- Sebetlela, Teboho, 2021, Chromium—Zimasco to invest in new ferrochrome capacity: London, United Kingdom, Roskill Information Services Ltd., September 22. (Accessed November 16, 2021, via <https://roskill.com/news/chromium-zimasco-to-invest-in-new-ferrochrome-capacity/>.)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2021, EPA fines Portland, Oregon glass company \$39k for violating toxic chemical reporting rules: Washington, D.C., News Releases from Region 10, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, September 16. (Accessed November 16, 2021, <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-fines-portland-oregon-glass-company-39k-violating-toxic-chemical-reporting-rules>.)

List services and web feed subscribers are the first to receive notification of USGS minerals information publications and data releases. For information on how to subscribe, go to <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic/minerals-information-publication-list-services>.

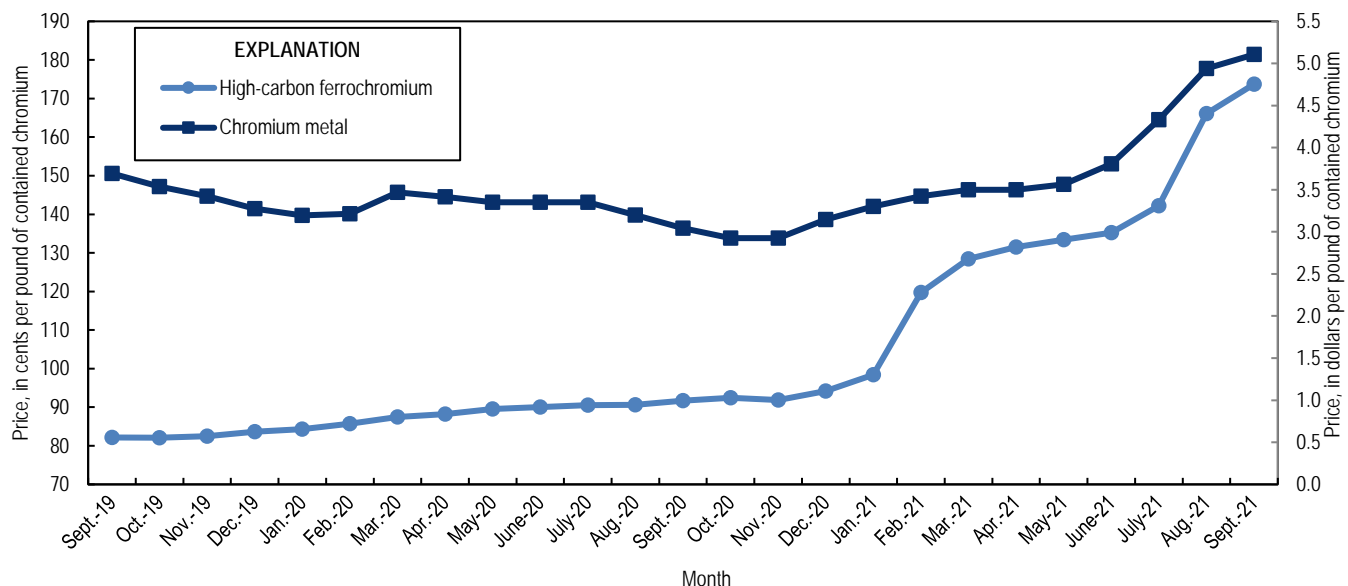


Figure 2. Average monthly prices for U.S. high-carbon ferrochromium from September 2019 through September 2021. Source: CRU Group.

TABLE 1
U.S. SALIENT CHROMIUM STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, gross weight)

	2020	2021			
	January– December	July	August	September	January– September ²
Production, stainless steel ³	2,140,000	189,000	184,000	179,000	1,830,000
Components of U.S. supply:					
Stainless steel scrap receipts	682,000	47,900 ^e	46,700 ^e	54,400	494,000 ^e
Stainless steel scrap consumption	1,040,000	72,400 ^e	70,600 ^e	68,000 ^e	744,000 ^e
Imports for consumption:					
Chromite ore	101,000	3,420	4,600	5,570	90,400
Ferrochromium:					
More than 4% carbon	310,000	37,400	32,100	37,700	270,000
More than 3% but not more than 4% carbon	212	--	--	118	6,700
More than 0.5% but not more than 3% carbon	3,360	--	166	189	1,810
Not more than 0.5% carbon	37,400	881	2,230	3,530	36,200
Ferrochromium silicon	15,800	--	485	1,490	16,900
Total ferroalloy imports	367,000	38,300	35,000	43,000	332,000
Chromium metal ⁴	11,600	1,000	1,450	689	8,850
Stainless steel	694,000	148,000	139,000	146,000	876,000
Stainless steel scrap	219,000	21,100	23,800	21,100	210,000
Distribution of U.S. supply:					
Consumption, industry, chromium ferroalloys and metal	350,000	26,200	26,200	26,100	235,000
Exports:					
Chromite ore	1,780	156	116	302	1,700
Chromium ferroalloys:					
High-carbon ferrochromium	949	192	397	296	1,170
Low-carbon ferrochromium	393	62	18	58	288
Ferrochromium silicon	238	20	20	--	152
Total ferroalloy exports	1,580	274	435	354	1,610
Chromium metal	379	15	47	25	384
Stainless steel	325,000	28,900	27,900	30,000	273,000
Stainless steel scrap	314,000	24,400	53,500	23,700	231,000
Stocks at end of period:					
Consumer, industry, chromium ferroalloys and metal	9,320	7,740	7,740	7,730	7,730
Government stockpile:					
Chromium ferroalloys	59,600	54,700	53,700	53,000	53,000
Chromium metal	3,750	3,690	3,620	3,620	3,620

^eEstimated. -- Zero.

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

²May include revised data that are not broken out by specific month(s).

³Data on stainless steel production reported by American Iron and Steel Institute; monthly, quarterly, and year-to-date production of stainless and heat-resisting raw steel.

⁴Includes waste and scrap and other.

TABLE 2
U.S. CONSUMPTION AND STOCKS OF CHROMIUM PRODUCTS¹

(Metric tons, gross weight unless otherwise noted)

	2021		
	August	September	January– September ²
Consumption by end use:			
Steel:			
Carbon steel	W	W	W
High-strength low-alloy steel	136	136	1,220
Stainless and heat-resisting steel	22,100	22,100	199,000
Unspecified steel ³	3,350	3,350	30,200
Superalloys	204	209	1,840
Other alloys and uses ⁴	W	W	W
Total	26,200	26,100	235,000
Total, chromium content	15,100	15,100	136,000
Consumption by material:			
Low-carbon ferrochromium	1,690	1,650	15,100
High-carbon ferrochromium	23,000	23,000	207,000
Ferrochromium silicon	W	W	W
Chromium metal	144	144	1,300
Chromite ore	141	144	1,270
Chromium-aluminum alloy	W	W	W
Other chromium materials	W	W	W
Total	26,200	26,100	235,000
Total, chromium content	15,100	15,100	136,000
Consumer stocks:			
Low-carbon ferrochromium	1,060	1,060	1,060
High-carbon ferrochromium	2,220	2,220	2,220
Ferrochromium silicon	W	W	W
Chromium metal	21	21	21
Chromium-aluminum alloy	W	W	W
Other chromium materials	W	W	W
Total	7,740	7,730	7,730
Total, chromium content	4,810	4,800	4,800

W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included in "Total."

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

²May include revised data that are not broken out by specific month(s).

³Includes electrical, full alloy, tool, and unspecified steel end uses.

⁴Includes cast irons, welding and alloy hard-facing rods and materials, wear- and corrosion-resistant alloys, and aluminum, copper, magnetic, nickel, and other alloys.

TABLE 3
U.S. GOVERNMENT STOCKPILE INVENTORY OF
CHROMIUM MATERIALS¹

(metric tons)

	Chromium ferroalloys		Chromium metal
	High-carbon ferro- chromium	Low-carbon ferro- chromium	
2020:			
September	33,900	26,800	3,830
October	33,900	26,800	3,830
November	33,900	26,800	3,790
December	33,000	26,600	3,750
2021:			
January	33,000	26,600	3,750
February	32,400	26,500	3,690
March	28,800	27,500	3,690
April	27,700	27,500	3,690
May	27,700	27,500	3,690
June	27,500	27,500	3,690
July	27,300	27,500	3,690
August	26,200	27,500	3,620
September	25,600	27,400	3,620

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

Source: Defense Logistics Agency, DLA Strategic Materials.

TABLE 4
U.S. EXPORTS OF CHROMITE ORE, CHROMIUM FERROALLOYS, AND METAL¹

	Chromite ore		Chromium ferroalloys ²			Chromium metal ³	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Chromium content (metric tons)	Value (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value (thousands)
2020:							
September	19	\$8	208	115	\$324	33	\$727
October	139	120	260	157	316	23	942
November	59	45	83	51	141	22	580
December	222	136	252	133	306	16	531
January–December ⁴	1,780	1,040	1,580	893	2,280	379	9,970
2021:							
January	70	55	24	15	43	44	1,050
February	420	264	111	58	169	30	650
March	208	147	209	100	401	47	783
April	157	128	28	17	54	25	659
May	115	106	94	59	155	66	1,200
June	155	86	82	43	142	86	1,200
July	156	104	274	147	529	15	406
August	116	81	435	212	600	47	1,000
September	302	191	354	167	484	25	773
January–September ⁴	1,700	1,160	1,610	818	2,580	384	7,730

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

²Includes low- and high-carbon ferrochromium and ferrochromium silicon.

³Includes chromium metal, waste and scrap, and unwrought powders.

⁴May include revised data that are not broken out by specific month(s).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF CHROMITE ORE, FERROCHROMIUM, AND
CHROMIUM METAL¹

(Metric tons)

	2020	2021		
	January– December	August	September	January– September ²
Chromite ore:				
Not more than 40% chromic oxide:				
Gross weight	3,600	2,770	2,170	13,800
Chromic oxide content	909	638	499	3,030
More than 40% but less than 46% chromic oxide:				
Gross weight	11,000	1,540	1,360	11,500
Chromic oxide content	4,780	678	586	5,010
46% or more chromic oxide:				
Gross weight	86,300	289	2,040	65,100
Chromic oxide content	77,500	170	982	54,700
Total, all grades:				
Gross weight	101,000	4,600	5,570	90,400
Chromic oxide content	83,200	1,490	2,070	62,700
Ferrochromium:				
Low-carbon: ³				
Not more than 0.5% carbon:				
Gross weight	37,400	2,230	3,530	36,200
Chromium content	25,200	1,630	2,560	25,600
More than 0.5% but not more than 3% carbon:				
Gross weight	3,360	166	189	1,810
Chromium content	2,260	117	134	1,250
Total, low-carbon:				
Gross weight	40,800	2,390	3,720	38,100
Chromium content	27,400	1,740	2,690	26,900
Medium-carbon: ⁴				
Gross weight	212	--	118	6,700
Chromium content	116	--	64	3,420
High-carbon: ⁵				
Gross weight	310,000	32,100	37,700	270,000
Chromium content	169,000	18,900	20,600	150,000
Total, all grades:				
Gross weight	351,000	34,500	41,500	315,000
Chromium content	196,000	20,700	23,400	180,000
Chromium metal:				
Unwrought powders	9,730	1,090	529	7,400
Waste and scrap	168	9	6	69
Other than waste and scrap and unwrought powders	1,740	349	154	1,390
Total, all grades	11,600	1,450	689	8,850

-- Zero.

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

²May include revised data that are not broken out by specific month(s).

³Ferrochromium containing not more than 3% carbon.

⁴Ferrochromium containing more than 3% carbon but not more than 4% carbon.

⁵Ferrochromium containing more than 4% carbon.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF FERROCHROMIUM IN 2021, BY GRADE AND COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

Grade and country or locality	September			January–September ²		
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Chromium content (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Chromium content (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)
High-carbon ferrochromium:⁴						
Albania	131	95	\$203	3,600	2,540	\$4,810
Brazil	540	305	598	790	448	860
Finland	5,000	2,640	5,570	24,500	13,000	24,700
Germany	--	--	--	9	6	18
India	--	--	--	1,320	811	1,160
Kazakhstan	9,120	6,280	21,600	49,500	34,200	88,400
Russia	291	196	420	11,600	7,950	17,700
South Africa	22,100	10,800	27,000	153,000	74,600	161,000
Sweden	--	--	--	11,100	7,400	16,200
Turkey	491	325	729	4,300	2,830	6,250
Zimbabwe	--	--	--	10,500	5,870	8,310
Total	37,700	20,600	56,100	270,000	150,000	330,000
Medium-carbon ferrochromium:⁵						
China	--	--	--	5	3	2
Russia	118	64	81	195	105	144
South Africa	--	--	--	6,500	3,310	5,340
Total	118	64	81	6,700	3,420	5,490
Low-carbon ferrochromium:⁶						
More than 0.5% but not more than 3% carbon						
Brazil	--	--	--	318	197	436
Kazakhstan	189	134	761	1,490	1,060	4,700
Total	189	134	761	1,810	1,250	5,140
Not more than 0.5% carbon:						
Belgium	--	--	--	368	287	1,160
Brazil	--	--	--	897	562	1,360
China	5	3	20	30	18	98
Germany	1,120	830	3,400	6,240	4,780	19,800
Japan	200	140	698	1,100	772	3,900
Kazakhstan	1,700	1,240	7,010	11,700	8,460	39,100
Russia	454	312	1,630	14,700	9,910	40,500
Turkey	50	35	177	1,240	856	2,860
United Kingdom	--	--	--	2	1	16
Total	3,530	2,560	12,900	36,200	25,600	109,000
All grades:						
Albania	131	95	203	3,600	2,540	4,810
Belgium	--	--	--	368	287	1,160
Brazil	540	305	598	2,000	1,210	2,660
China	5	3	20	35	21	101
Finland	5,000	2,640	5,570	24,500	13,000	24,700
Germany	1,120	830	3,400	6,250	4,790	19,800
India	--	--	--	1,320	811	1,160
Japan	200	140	698	1,100	772	3,900
Kazakhstan	11,000	7,660	29,400	62,700	43,800	132,000
Russia	863	572	2,130	26,400	18,000	58,400
South Africa	22,100	10,800	27,000	159,000	77,900	167,000
Sweden	--	--	--	11,100	7,400	16,200
Turkey	541	360	906	5,540	3,690	9,110
United Kingdom	--	--	--	2	1	16
Zimbabwe	--	--	--	10,500	5,870	8,310
Total	41,500	23,400	69,900	315,000	180,000	449,000

-- Zero.

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

²May include revised data that are not broken out by specific month(s).

³Customs import value generally represents a value in the foreign country and therefore excludes U.S. import duties, freight, insurance, and other charges incurred in bringing the merchandise into the United States.

⁴Ferrochromium containing more than 4% carbon.

⁵Ferrochromium containing more than 3% carbon but not more than 4% carbon.

⁶Ferrochromium containing not more than 3% carbon.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 7
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF CHROMIUM METAL IN 2021,
BY GRADE AND BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

Grade and country or locality	September		January-September ²	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)
Unwrought powders:				
Belgium	--	--	3	\$88
China	71	\$893	826	7,030
France	38	348	1,580	12,500
Germany	48	396	560	3,290
India	20	180	117	1,030
Japan	--	--	1	42
Korea, Republic of	--	--	1	22
Netherlands	--	--	48	346
Russia	243	3,620	2,850	20,600
Spain	--	--	60	288
United Kingdom	109	1,430	1,350	13,100
Total	529	6,860	7,400	58,300
Waste and scrap:				
Canada	--	--	18	67
Dominican Republic	--	--	1	5
Germany	--	--	1	10
Japan	--	--	5	35
Liechtenstein	--	--	1	6
Taiwan	--	--	1	15
United Kingdom	6	12	42	224
Total	6	12	69	362
Other than waste and scrap and unwrought powders:				
Canada	--	--	(4)	7
China	1	55	14	558
Estonia	--	--	2	71
Germany	1	100	14	782
Italy	--	--	2	40
Japan	--	--	4	197
Liechtenstein	--	--	(4)	21
Malaysia	--	--	(4)	23
Netherlands	--	--	(4)	7
Russia	86	652	1,110	7,330
South Africa	27	249	54	466
Spain	23	111	116	557
Taiwan	(4)	41	(4)	90
United Kingdom	16	227	66	856
Total	154	1,430	1,390	11,000
All grades:				
Belgium	--	--	3	88
Canada	--	--	18	74
China	72	947	840	7,580
Dominican Republic	--	--	1	5
Estonia	--	--	2	71
France	38	348	1,580	12,500
Germany	49	497	575	4,080
India	20	180	117	1,030
Italy	--	--	2	40
Japan	--	--	10	274
Korea, Republic of	--	--	1	22
Liechtenstein	--	--	2	27
Malaysia	--	--	(4)	23
Netherlands	--	--	48	353
Russia	329	4,270	3,970	27,900
South Africa	27	249	54	466
Spain	23	111	176	845
Taiwan	(4)	41	1	105
United Kingdom	131	1,670	1,460	14,200
Total	689	8,310	8,850	69,700

-- Zero.

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

²May include revised data that are not broken out by specific month(s).

³Customs import value generally represents a value in the foreign country and therefore excludes U.S. import duties, freight, insurance, and other charges incurred in bringing the merchandise into the United States.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 8
U.S. STAINLESS STEEL TRADE, BY PRODUCT, IN 2021¹

Stainless steel product	September		January–September ²	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ³ (thousands)
Exports:				
Ingot	1,090	\$6,670	12,600	\$67,200
Flat-rolled (width > 600 mm)	17,700	63,600	161,000	518,000
Flat-rolled (width < 600 mm)	4,900	34,800	43,700	262,000
Bars and rods in irregular coils	213	1,090	1,660	8,470
Other bars and rods	2,260	27,300	19,200	204,000
Wire	596	12,100	6,690	95,700
Tubes, pipes, hollow profiles	3,210	30,800	28,300	263,000
Total	30,000	176,000	273,000	1,420,000
Stainless steel scrap	23,700	34,700	231,000	238,000
Grand total	53,700	211,000	504,000	1,660,000
Imports:				
Ingot	79,400	54,300	370,000	484,000
Flat-rolled (width > 600 mm)	32,000	93,500	230,000	621,000
Flat-rolled (width < 600 mm)	4,800	17,900	43,300	150,000
Bars and rods in irregular coils	3,600	12,600	28,300	101,000
Other bars and rods	8,660	37,900	89,500	364,000
Wire	4,120	18,600	32,100	137,000
Tubes, pipes, hollow profiles	13,000	73,800	82,200	487,000
Total	146,000	308,000	876,000	2,340,000
Stainless steel scrap	21,100	31,300	210,000	282,000
Grand total	167,000	340,000	1,090,000	2,620,000

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

²May include revised data that are not broken out by specific month(s).

³Export value is free alongside ship. Import value is Customs import value, which generally represents a value in the foreign country and therefore excludes U.S. import duties, freight, insurance, and other incurred in bringing the merchandise into the United States.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.