

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN APRIL 2021

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in April 2021 was 10% less than that imported in April 2020. For the first 4 months of 2021, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was 35% less than that imported during the same period in 2020 (table 2). The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals in April 2021 was 57% more than that exported in April 2020. During the first 4 months of 2021, exports were 49% more than those during the same period in 2020 (table 4).

Prices

In the first 4 months of 2021, the cobalt market experienced higher prices and lower London Metal Exchange (LME) stocks compared with those in 2020 (fig. 1, table 1). In April, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price decreased by 11% from that in March and was 40% higher than that in April 2020. The monthly average LME cash mean price decreased by 7% from

that in March and was 66% higher than that in April 2020. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in April, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	20.75–23.50	22.04
LME cash mean ²	20.50–22.73	22.22

¹Source: S&P Global 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).

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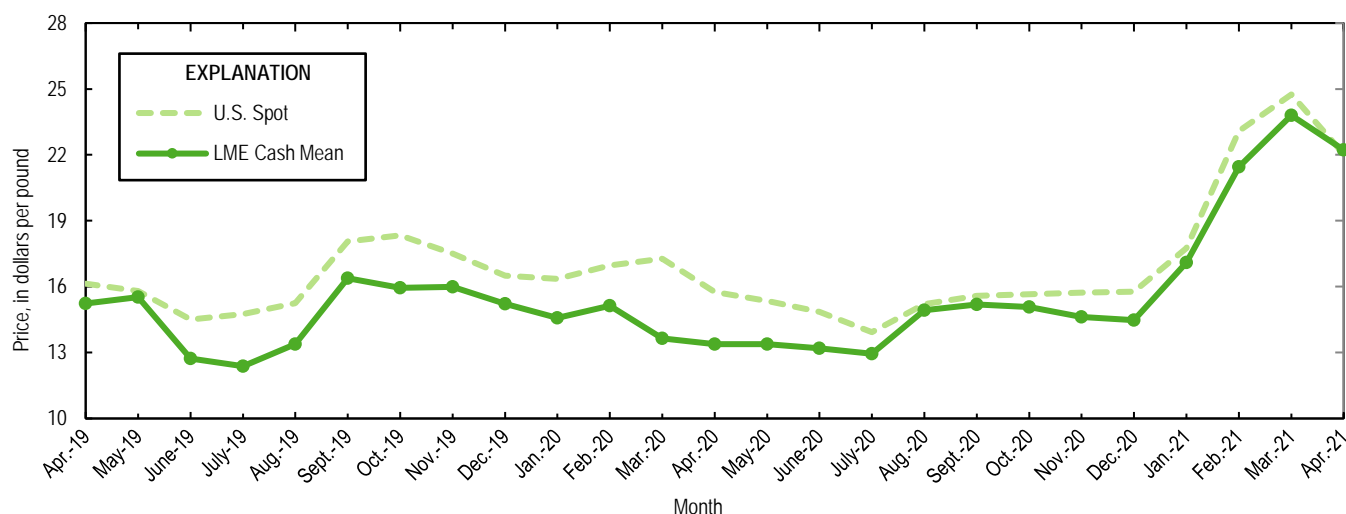


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for April 2019 through April 2021. Sources: S&P Global Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.

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	
2020:				
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
September	302	82	369	451
October	302	82	369	451
November	302	82	369	451
December	302	82	369	451
2021:				
January	302	73	353	426
February	302	73	254	327
March	302	50	244	294
April	302	50	244	294

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)		
2020:								
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	450	13,100	30	737	168	2,220	536	7,650
September	325	10,100	175	3,570	235 ^r	2,910 ^r	535 ^r	8,190
October	263	9,130	61	1,320	167 ^r	1,660 ^r	359 ^r	8,540
November	446	14,100	91	2,270	129	1,370	552	9,100
December	546	22,100	100	2,370	84	875	642	9,740
January–April	4,480	163,000 ^r	516	13,000	699 ^r	7,290 ^r	5,070	XX
January–December	8,140	282,000	1,260	30,600	2,070 ^r	23,500 ^r	9,740	XX
2021:								
January	507	16,900	137	3,600	204	2,370	674	674
February	223	7,880	175	4,170	179	2,170	409	1,080
March	1,000	39,900	176	5,300	269	2,740	1,210	2,290
April:								
Australia	40	1,450	--	--	--	--	40	44
Belgium	7	358	46	1,750	70	483	58	178
Brazil	--	--	--	--	25	446	10	63
Canada	48	1,750	--	--	1	14	49	249
China	8	227	5	101	5	66	13	23
Finland	39	1,890	72	2,450	46	911	110	473
Germany	23	1,090	--	--	18	191	28	46
Italy	4	114	1	48	--	--	5	5
Japan	168	6,360	--	--	10	51	170	543
Madagascar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15
Mexico	--	--	--	--	19	280	5	8
Morocco	40	1,920	--	--	--	--	40	142
Norway	260	12,500	--	--	--	--	260	1,100
Russia	142	4,410	--	--	(7)	4	142	175
South Africa	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	19
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	86	1,140	21	48
United Kingdom	3	185	35	1,190	18	278	33	143
Other	2	110	--	--	--	--	2	7
Total	784	32,300	159	5,540	298	3,860	985	3,280
January–April	2,510	97,000	648	18,600	950	11,100	3,280	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)
2020:						
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	87 ^r	1,270 ^r	21	3,430
August	12	472	128	1,800	14	2,150
September	22	937	39	509	31	3,640
October	1	46	52	544	22	3,210
November	10	421	116	1,620	23	3,380
December	46	2,100	132	1,100	18	3,670
January–April	138	6,850	663	6,450	148	18,000
January–December	272	12,800	1,430	15,200	319	44,400
2021:						
January	53	2,230	84	1,330	20	2,530
February	30	1,230	96	1,170	17	2,990
March	15	749	127	1,210	16	3,370
April:						
Belgium	4	193	4	173	--	--
Canada	(3)	34	14	161	3	688
China	(3)	6	--	--	2	526
France	--	--	29	432	1	840
Germany	--	--	--	--	19	346
Ireland	--	--	15	11	--	--
Japan	--	--	33	354	(3)	5
United Kingdom	--	--	13	274	12	600
Other	--	--	--	--	(3)	34
Total	4	232	108	1,400	37	3,040
January–April	103	4,440	415	5,110	90	11,900

^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)		
2020:								
April	351	\$8,700	3	\$109	39	\$340	363	1,310
May	260	9,300 ^r	9	380	51	2,060	279	1,590
June	398	8,360 ^r	8	329	29	174	411	2,000
July	248	7,250	8	230	59	266	268	2,260
August	271	6,610	11	262	9	23	281	2,540
September	231	6,300	3	131	31	232	240	2,790
October	269	8,650	2	86	20	52	275	3,060
November	157	6,680	(7)	11	38	254	166	3,230
December	213	6,090	1	31	--	--	213	3,440
January–April	1,250 ^r	38,500 ^r	31	1,170	139	764	1,310 ^r	XX
January–December	3,300 ^r	97,700 ^r	74	2,630	376	3,830	3,440 ^r	XX
2021:								
January	403	11,200	1	29	--	--	403	403
February	470	11,300	21	222	(7)	4	485	889
March	481	9,650	5	192	(7)	6	484	1,370
April	569	14,000	1	28	(7)	4	570	1,940
January–April	1,920	46,200	27	471	1	15	1,940	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)
2020:				
April	100	\$10,700 ^r	(3)	\$6
May	109	11,500	--	--
June	97	11,000	--	--
July	96	11,200	--	--
August	100	9,650	--	--
September	108	10,400	--	--
October	167	14,300	--	--
November	112	10,700	--	--
December	135	12,600	--	--
January–April	454 ^r	50,700 ^r	150	521
January–December	1,380	142,000 ^r	150	521
2021:				
January	87	10,100	--	--
February	113	14,400	--	--
March	151	13,500	--	--
April	116	12,100	2	14
January–April	466	50,100	2	14

^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.