

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN JUNE 2021

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in June 2021 was 89% more than that imported in June 2020. During the first half of 2021, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was 20% 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 June 2021 was 28% less than that exported in June 2020. During the first half of 2021, exports were 34% more than those during the same period in 2020 (table 4).

Prices

In the first half 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 June, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price increased slightly from that in May and was 39% higher than that in June 2020. The monthly average LME cash mean price was essentially

unchanged from that in May and was 52% higher than that in June 2020. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in June, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	19.90–21.70	20.61
LME cash mean ²	19.28–22.00	20.02

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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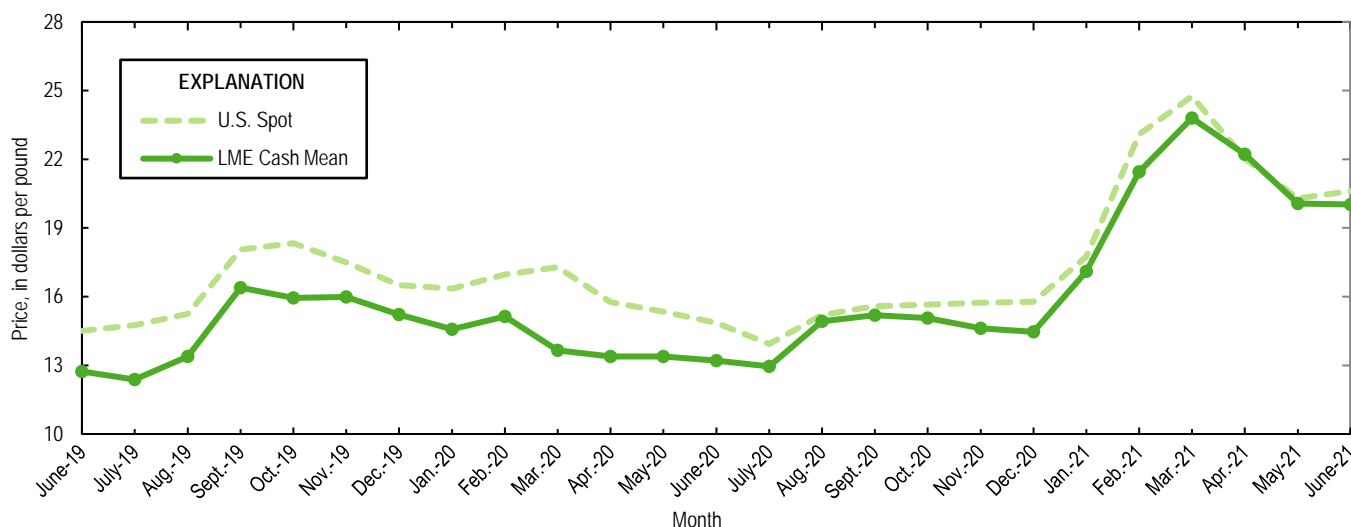


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for June 2019 through June 2021. Sources: S&P Global Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.

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:				
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
May	302	50	247	297
June	302	50	241	291

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:								
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	2,910	535	8,190
October	263	9,130	61	1,320	167	1,660	359	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–June	5,390	191,000	704	17,800	1,180 ^r	13,100	6,280	XX
January–December	8,140	282,000	1,260	30,600	2,070	23,500	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	784	32,300	159	5,540	298	3,860	985	3,280
May	508	21,800	172	6,370	335	4,430	722	4,000
June:								
Australia	52	2,150	--	--	--	--	52	100
Belgium	--	--	34	1,390	--	--	24	250
Brazil	--	--	--	--	36	259	11	84
Canada	29	958	--	--	--	--	29	366
China	5	106	45	954	51	219	51	80
Finland	106	5,190	71	2,290	285	3,370	234	783
Germany	11	737	--	--	--	--	11	61
Italy	--	--	(7)	15	--	--	(7)	6
Japan	60	2,380	--	--	--	--	60	674
Korea, Republic of	(7)	3	--	--	--	--	(7)	5
Madagascar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15
Mexico	60	2,120	--	--	--	--	60	68
Morocco	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	142
Norway	390	16,300	--	--	--	--	390	1,790
Russia	22	962	--	--	--	--	22	219
South Africa	1	35	--	--	--	--	1	30
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	16	253	4	81
United Kingdom	4	243	85	2,760	5	28	67	261
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6
Total	740	31,200	236	7,410	392	4,130	1,020	5,020
January–June	3,760	150,000	1,060	32,400	1,680	19,700	5,020	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)
2020:						
June	3	\$146	65	\$288	20	\$3,230
July	10	460	87	1,270	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–June	171	8,390	874	8,380	190	24,900
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	4	232	108	1,400	37	3,040
May	3	166	145	1,840	9	3,270
June:						
Belgium	5	243	4	77	--	--
Canada	4	171	58	551	2	744
China	2	129	9	8	1	313
France	--	--	--	--	6	1,030
Germany	--	--	17	134	4	642
Ireland	--	--	28	207	(3)	39
Japan	--	--	13	184	--	--
Russia	--	--	3	58	1	11
Tunisia	--	--	3	35	--	--
United Kingdom	--	--	10	216	7	613
Other	(3)	3	2	7	1	143
Total	11	546	149	1,480	22	3,530
January–June	117	5,150	709	8,430	121	18,700

-- 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:								
June	398	\$8,360	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–June	1,910 ^r	56,100 ^r	49	1,880	219	3,000	2,000 ^r	XX
January–December	3,300	97,700	74	2,630	376	3,830	3,440	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
May	439	14,300	3	68	--	--	441	2,380
June	295	8,020	3	106	1	18	298	2,680
January–June	2,660	68,500	33	646	2	33	2,680	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:				
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-June	661 ^r	73,200 ^r	150	\$521
January-December	1,380	142,000	150	521
2021:				
January	87	10,100	--	--
February	113	14,400	--	--
March	151	13,500	--	--
April	116	12,100	2	14
May	105	11,000	--	--
June	114	12,000	--	--
January-June	686	73,000	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.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.