

Mineral Industry Surveys

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ALUMINUM IN MAY 2021

Domestic primary aluminum production in May 2021 was 75,000 metric tons (t). The average daily production in May 2021 was 2,410 t, unchanged from that in April 2021, 22% less than that in May 2020, and 21% less than that in May 2019 (fig. 1, table 1).

Total aluminum recovered from scrap in May 2021 was 257,000 t, slightly less than that in April 2021, 13% more than the revised amount in May 2020, but 10% less than that in May 2019. Of this, 138,000 t of aluminum was recovered from new scrap, and 119,000 t was recovered from old scrap (fig. 1, table 1).

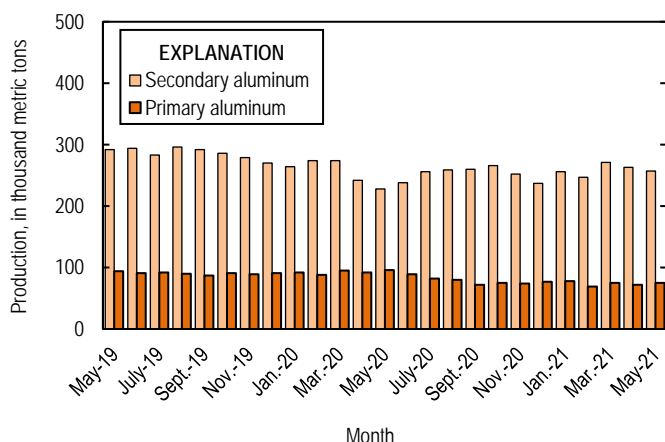


Figure 1. Monthly domestic primary and secondary aluminum production from May 2019 through May 2021.

Prices and Stocks

The May 2021 average U.S. spot market price of primary aluminum ingot was \$1.37 per pound, 7% more than that in April 2021, 83% more than that in May 2020, and 37% more than that in May 2019. The average cash price in May 2021 of primary aluminum ingot on the London Metal Exchange (LME) was \$1.10 per pound, 5% more than that in April 2021, 67% more than that in May 2020, and 37% more than that in May 2019 (fig. 2, table 6).

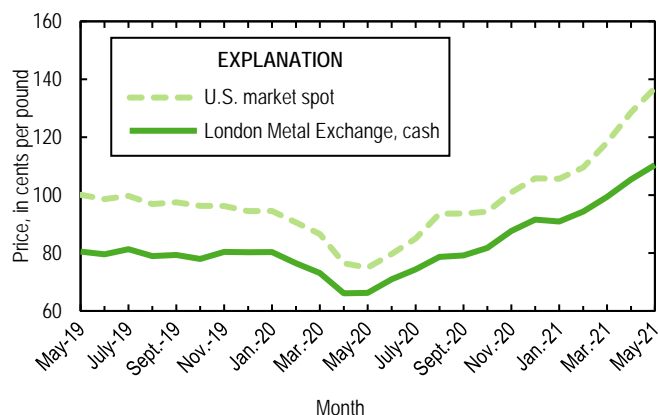


Figure 2. Average monthly prices for primary aluminum from May 2019 through May 2021. Source: S&P Global Platts Metals Week.

Inventories of primary aluminum in LME-approved warehouses, including off-warrant inventories, in the United States decreased to 121,200 t at the end of May 2021 from 184,048 t at the end of April 2021. Inventories of secondary aluminum (North American Secondary Aluminum Alloy Contract) in LME-approved warehouses, including off-warrant inventories, in the United States decreased to 13,959 t at the end of May 2021 from 15,840 t at the end of April 2021 (London Metal Exchange Ltd., 2021a, b, c, d).

Update

On July 26, Rio Tinto plc shutdown approximately 281,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of capacity at the 432,000-t/yr smelter in Kitimat, British Columbia, Canada. A labor dispute involving approximately 900 of the 1,050 employees was cited for the shutdown. The union representing employees announced a strike after seven weeks of negotiations for a collective bargaining agreement failed to reach an agreement. Production from approximately 150,000-t/yr of capacity would continue by employees not involved in the dispute (Rio Tinto plc, 2021).

The Government of Russia announced an export duty on aluminum and other metals that will be in effect from August 1 to yearend. The duty base rate would be 15% with a specific duty of \$254 per metric ton on aluminum. The duty would be applied to unwrought, nonalloyed aluminum and to some alloyed products including extrusion billet, foundry alloys, and rolling slab. Many market traders predicted that prices in the United States and countries in Europe would increase to reflect the duty, and United Company RUSAL Plc (which owns all the primary aluminum smelters in Russia) stated that it planned to pass on at least part of the duty to customers. In the first quarter of 2021, RUSAL reported that 42% of its sales were to countries in Europe and 8% of its sales were to the United States. Russia was the source of 4% of crude aluminum imports to the United States in 2021 through the end of May (table 8). The Government of Russia cited efforts to control metal price inflation in Russia for the export duty (Bouckley, 2021; Hinton and Roh, 2021; Roh, 2021a, b; Yang and Mason, 2021).

Century Aluminum Co. signed a three-year extension to its power supply agreement with Landsvirkjun, the national power company of Iceland, for the Grundartangi smelter. The contract would provide for power to the 260,000-t/yr smelter through 2026, including an increase in the amount of power supplied as capacity creep increases production from the smelter (Century Aluminum Co., 2021).

South32 Ltd. signed a 10-year power supply contract with South Africa's state-owned utility Eskom for the Hillside smelter. The contract would provide for power to the 720,000-t/yr smelter through 2031 and replaces contracts that included pricing based on the LME aluminum price and were priced in US dollars (Warwick, 2021).

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TABLE 1
COMPONENTS OF ALUMINUM SUPPLY¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Primary production	Secondary recovery ²			Imports for consumption			Total new supply ³	Stocks, end of period ⁴
		New	Old	Total	Metals and alloys, crude	Plates, sheets, bars, etc.	Total		
2020 ^p	1,012	1,630 ^r	1,420	3,050 ^r	3,270	1,050	4,320	8,380 ^r	1,490
2020:									
May	96	121 ^r	107	228 ^r	316	80	396	720 ^r	1,530
June	89	125 ^r	113	238 ^r	262	88	350	677 ^r	1,430
July	82	139	118	256 ^r	253	84	337	675 ^r	1,410
August	80	137 ^r	122	259 ^r	270	85	355	694 ^r	1,410
September	72	140 ^r	120	260 ^r	214	79	293	625 ^r	1,400
October	75	142 ^r	123 ^r	266 ^r	231	80	311	652 ^r	1,450
November	74	134 ^r	119	252 ^r	241	80	321	647 ^r	1,430
December	77	124 ^r	113 ^r	237 ^r	229	78	307	621 ^r	1,490
January–May	462	693 ^r	589 ^r	1,280 ^r	1,570	473 ^r	2,040 ^r	3,790 ^r	1,490
2021:									
January	78	134 ^r	123	256 ^r	250	84	334	668 ^r	1,470
February	69	131 ^r	116 ^r	247 ^r	243	81	324	640 ^r	1,480
March	75	154 ^r	117	271 ^r	308	121	429	775 ^r	1,470
April	72	144 ^r	118 ^r	263	324	109	433	768	1,660
May	75	138	119	257	313	114	427	759	1,680
January–May	369	701	593	1,290	1,440	509	1,950	3,610	1,680

^PPreliminary. ^rRevised.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except "Primary production"; may not add to totals shown.

²Metallic recovery from purchased, tolled, or imported scrap, expanded for full coverage of industry.

³Primary production, secondary recovery, and imports for consumption.

⁴Inventory levels reflect total for U.S. and Canadian producers; data from the Aluminum Association Inc.

TABLE 2
ESTIMATED FULL COVERAGE CONSUMPTION OF AND METALLIC RECOVERY FROM
PURCHASED NEW AND OLD ALUMINUM SCRAP¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Secondary smelters		Independent mill fabricators		Foundries		Other consumers		Total	
	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery	Con-sump-tion	Metal recovery
2020 ^p	2,010 ^r	1,550 ^r	1,550 ^r	1,410	91	84	4	4	3,650 ^r	3,050 ^r
2020:										
May	157 ^r	123 ^r	108	99	6	5	(2)	(2)	272 ^r	228 ^r
June	159 ^r	124 ^r	118	108	6	5	(2)	(2)	283 ^r	238 ^r
July	165 ^r	128 ^r	132	121	8	8	(2)	(2)	306 ^r	256 ^r
August	166 ^r	129 ^r	133	121	8	8	(2)	(2)	308 ^r	259 ^r
September	170 ^r	131 ^r	132	121	8	8	(2)	(2)	311 ^r	260 ^r
October	172 ^r	133 ^r	136	125	8	8	(2)	(2)	317 ^r	266 ^r
November	169 ^r	129 ^r	126	115	8	8	(2)	(2)	303 ^r	252 ^r
December	168 ^r	129 ^r	111	101 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	288 ^r	237 ^r
January–May	840 ^r	649 ^r	656 ^r	600 ^r	35	32	2	2	1,530 ^r	1,280 ^r
2021:										
January	173 ^r	132 ^r	128	117 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	310 ^r	256 ^r
February	166 ^r	129 ^r	120	110 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	295 ^r	247 ^r
March	176 ^r	134 ^r	141	129	8	8	(2)	(2)	325 ^r	272 ^r
April	175 ^r	135 ^r	131 ^r	120 ^r	8	8	(2)	(2)	315 ^r	263
May	172	133	127	116	8	8	(2)	(2)	308	257
January–May	862	663	646	591	42	39	2	2	1,550	1,290

^pPreliminary. ^rRevised.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

TABLE 3
CONSUMPTION OF AND RECOVERY FROM PURCHASED
NEW AND OLD ALUMINUM SCRAP IN MAY 2021¹

(Metric tons)

	Consumption		Calculated metallic recovery	
	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage	Tabulated reports	Estimated full coverage
Secondary smelters	144,000	172,000	111,000	133,000
Independent mill fabricators	114,000	127,000	104,000	116,000
Foundries	7,040	8,450	6,440	7,730
Other consumers	273	328	273	328
Total	265,000	308,000	222,000	257,000

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

TABLE 4
PURCHASED AND TOLL-TREATED ALUMINUM-BASE SCRAP IN MAY 2021¹

(Metric tons)

	May				January–May ²	
	Stocks, opening ²	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed	Stocks, closing	Net receipts ³	Melted or consumed
New scrap:						
Extrusion	19,300	38,500	38,200	19,500	195,000	194,000
Can stock clippings	7,150	27,900	27,600	7,540	140,000	139,000
Other wrought sheet/clippings	7,980	32,400	31,300	9,070	161,000	166,000
Casting	4,490	7,120	7,120	4,490	32,300	32,300
Borings and turnings	4,360	11,800	11,800	4,370	56,000	57,700
Dross and skimmings	13,300	33,200	33,200	13,300	169,000	169,000
Total new scrap	56,600	151,000	149,000	58,300	754,000	759,000
Old scrap:						
Used castings	8,150	27,300	27,300	8,150	136,000	136,000
Used extrusion	7,680	16,700	16,700	7,680	82,000	83,300
Used cans (shredded, loose, baled)	8,580	39,200	39,300	8,470	188,000	188,000
Other wrought products	15,400	23,000	21,200	17,200	115,000	110,000
Fragmentized shredder (auto shredder)	4,870	11,500	11,200	5,220	58,300	57,800
Total old scrap	44,700	118,000	116,000	46,800	580,000	576,000
Total all classes	101,000	269,000	265,000	105,000	1,330,000	1,330,000

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

²May include revisions to previously published data.

³Includes data on imported aluminum-base scrap.

TABLE 5
ALUMINUM ALLOYS PRODUCED AT SECONDARY SMELTERS IN THE UNITED
STATES IN MAY 2021^{1,2}

(Metric tons)

	May				January–May	
	Stocks, opening ³	Production	Net shipments	Stocks, closing	Production	Net shipments
Die-cast alloys:						
13% Si, 360, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	2,760	2,600	2,600	2,760	13,000	13,000
380 and variations	6,350	18,300	18,300	6,350	91,700	91,700
Sand and permanent mold:						
95/5 Al-Si, 356, etc. (0.6% Cu, max.)	2,120	2,850	2,850	2,120	14,300	14,300
No. 319 and variations	2,110	2,210	2,210	2,110	11,000	11,000
F-132 alloy and variations	128	198	198	128	989	989
Al-Zn alloys	37	29	29	37	143	143
Al-Si alloys (0.6% to 2.0% Cu)	143	186	186	143	932	932
Al-Cu alloys (1.5% Si, max.)	423	297	297	423	1,490	1,490
Other ⁴	7,630	7,870	7,870	7,630	39,300	39,300
Wrought alloys, extrusion billets	10,100	53,100	53,100	10,100	266,000	266,000
Total all alloys	31,900	87,700	87,700	31,900	438,000	438,000
Less:						
Primary aluminum consumed	XX	15,600	XX	XX	77,900	XX
Primary silicon consumed	XX	1,630	XX	XX	8,170	XX
Other alloying ingredients consumed	XX	733	XX	XX	3,660	XX
Net metallic recovery from aluminum scrap consumed in production of secondary aluminum ingot ⁵	XX	69,700	XX	XX	349,000	XX

XX Not applicable.

¹Excludes integrated aluminum companies.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

³May include revisions to previously published data.

⁴Includes alloys No. 12, Al-Mg, Al-Zn, Al-Cu, Al-Si-Cu-Ni, aluminum-base hardeners, variations of these alloys, plus other aluminum alloys.

⁵No allowance made for melt-loss of primary aluminum and alloying ingredients.

TABLE 6
AVERAGE PRICE OF ALUMINUM IN THE UNITED STATES
AND ON THE LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Cents per pound)

Period	Midwest U.S. market price	LME cash price Grade A
2020:		
May	74.961	66.215
June	79.682	70.943
July	85.022	74.360
August	93.613	78.648
September	93.627	79.167
October	94.236	81.774
November	100.921	87.639
December	105.798	91.531
January–December	89.666	77.187
2021:		
January	105.638	90.891
February	109.548	94.329
March	118.185	99.409
April	128.563	105.404
May	136.947	110.397
January–May	119.776	100.086

Source: S&P Global Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 7
AVERAGE BUYING PRICES FOR ALUMINUM SCRAP

(Cents per pound)

Month	Used beverage cans	Mixed low copper clips	Old sheet	Old cast	Turnings (clean and dry)
2020:					
May	39.80	36.80	32.35	33.80	29.25
June	44.77	37.50	35.39	35.77	29.91
July	47.45	40.09	37.86	37.20	31.23
August	48.40	42.69	40.52	39.60	34.64
September	50.93	46.10	43.90	43.60	37.88
October	52.18	48.18	46.73	47.00	40.55
November	56.55	51.45	51.42	51.76	46.06
December	62.82	58.86	58.02	57.50	50.41
January–December	49.90	43.57	41.19	41.39	35.73
2021:					
January	65.00	64.50	61.50	63.00	59.00
February	67.50	65.63	64.50	65.50	64.00
March	73.00	68.50	66.50	68.50	68.75
April	75.50	72.10	68.90	70.50	69.20
May	74.13	74.50	70.50	71.00	69.50
January–May	71.03	69.05	66.38	67.70	66.09

Source: Fastmarket-AMM.

TABLE 8
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ALUMINUM IN MAY 2021¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	Metals and alloys, crude		Plates, sheets, bars, etc		Scrap		Total	
	January–		January–		January–		January–	
	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
Argentina	18,200	35,700	--	6	--	--	18,200	35,700
Australia	6,640	45,000	12	208	--	--	6,650	45,200
Austria	--	(2)	2,300	11,200	--	1	2,300	11,200
Bahrain	20,400	62,000	537	8,720	--	--	20,900	70,700
Belgium	--	122	1,090	5,380	--	--	1,090	5,510
Brazil	--	(2)	31	72	1,560	9,160	1,590	9,230
Canada	200,000	1,010,000	20,100	101,000	34,100	167,000	254,000	1,280,000
Chile	--	--	--	--	359	1,080	359	1,080
China	31	1,110	11,800	55,000	28	103	11,800	56,200
Colombia	--	--	473	2,640	428	2,660	901	5,310
Costa Rica	--	--	24	41	225	1,060	249	1,100
France	141	881	702	3,070	9	93	852	4,050
Germany	313	1,120	3,400	17,600	434	1,390	4,150	20,100
Greece	--	--	1,820	8,340	10	10	1,830	8,350
Guatemala	--	--	--	14	1,050	5,010	1,050	5,030
Honduras	--	--	509	2,270	--	72	509	2,350
Hong Kong	--	(2)	321	1,440	--	--	321	1,440
India	4,320	26,000	1,000	4,680	--	--	5,320	30,700
Indonesia	--	--	1,840	8,800	--	--	1,840	8,800
Italy	--	300	996	6,520	--	--	996	6,820
Japan	--	--	4,910	17,900	--	2,220	4,910	20,200
Korea, Republic of	1,560	5,540	3,820	13,700	16	94	5,400	19,300
Malaysia	--	4	1,240	5,780	--	--	1,240	5,790
Mexico	1,880	7,350	4,300	21,700	18,800	86,000	25,000	115,000
Netherlands	100	212	241	1,220	300	644	641	2,070
New Zealand	19	397	1	5	--	--	20	402
Norway	--	97	1,340	4,940	--	--	1,340	5,040
Oman	2,180	3,460	8,290	34,900	--	--	10,500	38,300
Qatar	8,260	30,800	--	--	--	--	8,260	30,800
Romania	--	--	198	2,190	--	--	198	2,190
Russia	16,100	64,100	796	5,700	--	--	16,900	69,800
Saudi Arabia	--	--	5,350	26,000	196	196	5,550	26,200
South Africa	507	529	3,440	13,000	--	--	3,950	13,500
Spain	96	415	2,640	11,200	424	2,000	3,160	13,600
Sweden	--	--	903	4,070	--	--	903	4,070
Switzerland	--	1	898	3,510	--	2	898	3,510
Taiwan	--	32	513	3,400	1	6	514	3,430
Thailand	17	292	6,290	25,700	42	235	6,350	26,200
Turkey	(2)	1	6,540	23,000	--	--	6,540	23,000
United Arab Emirates	32,800	142,000	29	770	--	--	32,900	142,000
United Kingdom	17	41	611	1,900	660	3,040	1,290	4,980
Vietnam	--	1	5,020	14,600	1	1	5,020	14,600
Other	24	168	9,390	36,600	1,640	8,100	11,100	44,900
Total	313,000	1,440,000	114,000	509,000	60,300	290,000	487,000	2,240,000

-- Zero.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 9
U.S. EXPORTS OF ALUMINUM IN MAY 2021¹

(Metric tons)

Country or locality	Metals and alloys, crude		Plates, sheets, bars, etc.		Scrap		Total	
	January–		January–		January–		January–	
	May	May	May	May	May	May	May	May
Australia	103	504	248	637	--	235	351	1,380
Belgium	(2)	1	41	134	139	615	180	750
Brazil	--	27	178	553	546	3,120	724	3,700
Canada	4,940	29,000	24,800	131,000	7,330	37,000	37,100	197,000
China	118	710	841	4,690	1,590	9,560	2,550	15,000
Colombia	44	44	82	303	--	118	126	465
Dominican Republic	--	10	31	181	65	685	96	876
France	16	63	495	2,250	58	296	569	2,610
Germany	1	38	220	1,690	476	1,520	697	3,250
Guatemala	--	--	6	41	--	--	6	41
Hong Kong	--	245	144	454	28,700	123,000	28,900	124,000
India	323	453	46	327	29,600	141,000	30,000	142,000
Indonesia	--	--	(2)	5	5,910	29,100	5,910	29,100
Ireland	(2)	13	1	209	--	--	1	222
Israel	2	12	1,210	5,320	--	--	1,210	5,330
Italy	(2)	(2)	82	299	76	819	158	1,120
Jamaica	1	1	1	18	1	1	3	20
Japan	--	58	381	1,350	2,460	9,060	2,840	10,500
Korea, Republic of	64	385	1,570	6,330	18,600	105,000	20,200	112,000
Malaysia	2	2	226	1,790	42,000	188,000	42,300	190,000
Mexico	10,200	50,100	22,000	118,000	13,300	73,800	45,500	242,000
Netherlands	8	42	40	157	316	1,100	364	1,300
New Zealand	1	3	65	234	--	--	66	237
Norway	--	--	3	6	--	--	3	6
Pakistan	--	--	1	17	1,820	7,390	1,820	7,410
Panama	--	2	18	43	--	--	18	45
Philippines	--	--	8	32	302	1,880	310	1,910
Poland	--	(2)	33	155	--	--	33	155
Romania	4	48	50	197	--	--	54	245
Russia	--	--	5	31	3,710	20,900	3,720	20,900
Saudi Arabia	--	--	6	147	--	187	6	334
Singapore	14	73	275	1,400	239	519	528	2,000
Spain	8	23	19	111	87	1,050	114	1,180
Taiwan	--	923	305	2,340	2,660	12,700	2,970	15,900
Thailand	--	(2)	64	290	5,190	31,900	5,250	32,200
Turkey	(2)	1	135	832	551	3,270	686	4,100
United Arab Emirates	--	--	237	1,090	1,280	3,770	1,510	4,860
United Kingdom	9	65	695	2,240	228	1,420	932	3,720
Vietnam	--	1	61	222	993	6,810	1,050	7,040
Other	233	1,410	421	1,530	1,300	7,480	1,950	10,400
Total	16,100	84,300	55,100	287,000	170,000	824,000	241,000	1,200,000

-- Zero.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.