2020 U.S. ETHANOL EXPORTS & IMPORTS
Statistical Summary

The U.S. exported 1.33 billion gallons of ethanol in 2020—down 9% from 2019 but still the fourth-highest volume on record. American-made ethanol was exported to 90 countries on all six inhabited continents around the world.

Exports fell after the first quarter of 2020 due to the pandemic and trade restrictions but rebounded in the fourth quarter. Undenatured fuel ethanol accounted for 43% of 2020 exports, while denatured fuel ethanol represented 50%.

Exports designated as industrial (non-fuel) ethanol rose to 8% of shipments from 5% in 2019.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
9.6% of the ethanol produced in the U.S. in 2020 was exported—the second-highest share on record.

The value of U.S. ethanol exports was relatively stable at $2.33 billion in 2020, the fifth-highest ever. Exports remain a key revenue generator for the industry.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
2020 ethanol export volumes to the Top 10 markets are shown in the table below, along with a comparison to 2019 volumes. All figures are shown in millions of gallons, unless otherwise noted.

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>296.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>326.4</td>
<td>330.7</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>199.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>199.8</td>
<td>332.3</td>
<td>-39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>189.6</td>
<td>173.8</td>
<td>+9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>105.8</td>
<td>121.3</td>
<td>-12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>+49.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>-15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>+103.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>-30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>-7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>+69.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
North America recaptured its former position as the largest regional destination for U.S. exports in 2020, based on stable exports to Canada and a doubling of shipments to Mexico. Exports to to South Asia (predominantly India) and East Asia grew. However, shipments to South America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East declined significantly.

The main cause of the decline in U.S. exports was a 40% drop in shipments to Brazil, which resulted from the pandemic, uncertainty over the status of the tariff rate quota, and the eventual imposition of a tariff. Shipments to India were a bright spot, growing by 9% as industrial alcohol was in demand.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
Net exports of ethanol receded in 2020 due to the decline in exports. Still, the U.S. was a net exporter for the 11th straight year.

Two-thirds of U.S. ethanol exports departed via the Gulf of Mexico in 2020. The Great Lakes and Northern Tier were significant points of exit, with additional volumes shipped from Pacific Northwest ports.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of Agriculture, and U.S. International Trade Commission
2020 U.S. ETHANOL IMPORTS

U.S. imports of fuel ethanol receded to **173 million gallons** in 2020 but remained elevated compared to recent years.

**Virtually all** of fuel ethanol imports came from **Brazil**, which again benefited from high prices of California Low Carbon Fuel Standard credits and the price spread between advanced and conventional biofuel RINs used for RFS compliance. Additionally, Brazil’s currency depreciated significantly.

**Sources:** U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
For the second straight year, imports accounted for just over 1% of the ethanol consumed in the U.S.—higher than in recent years but lower than in 2012 and 2013.

California ports received 99% of the fuel ethanol imported into the U.S. in 2020, driven by the state’s Low Carbon Fuel Standard.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of Agriculture, and U.S. International Trade Commission
ABOUT THE DATA IN THIS REPORT

U.S. Ethanol Export Data

- The export data in this report includes exports classified under the following Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) codes:
  - **2207200010**: Ethyl alcohol and other spirits, denatured, of any strength: For fuel use
  - **2207106010**: Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of 80 percent vol. or higher: For non-beverage purposes: For fuel use
  - **2207200090**: Ethyl alcohol and other spirits, denatured, of any strength: Other
  - **2207106090**: Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of 80 percent vol. or higher: For non-beverage purposes: Other

- 2207200090 and 2207106090 are included in this report because there is some anecdotal evidence that exports of ethanol intended for fuel use are sometimes classified under these codes. In any case, ethanol classified under these codes represented 8% of the 2019 U.S. exports discussed in this report.

U.S. Ethanol Import Data

- The import data in this report includes imports classified under the following Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) codes:
  - **2207200010**: Ethyl alcohol and other spirits, denatured, of any strength: For fuel use
  - **2207106010**: Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of 80 percent vol. or higher: For non-beverage purposes: For fuel use

Sources


The Renewable Fuels Association publishes monthly summaries of export and import data for ethanol and distillers dried grains in its Trade Monitor.

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