Hg

Mercury

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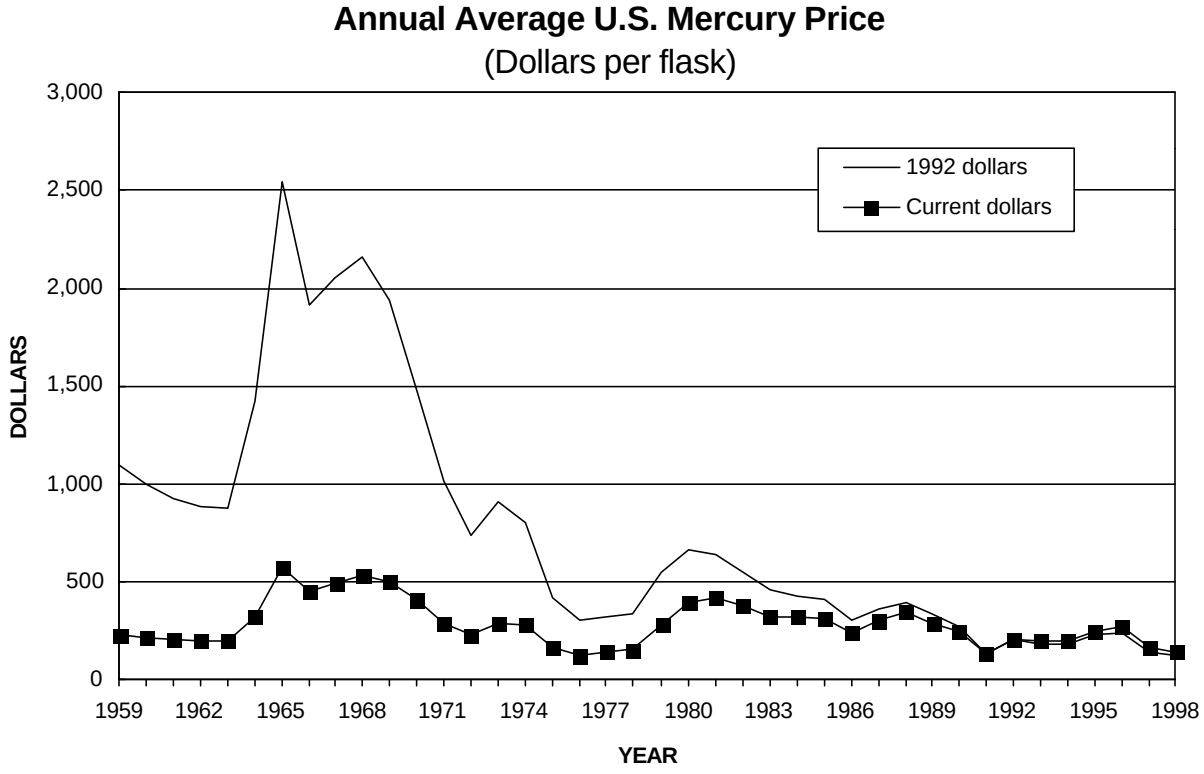

Significant event affecting mercury prices since 1958

1971 Mercury declared a hazardous air pollutant by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

In the 20th century, the mercury price has been very volatile. During the first half of the century, the price increased significantly three times. These increases coincided with periods of increased demand, namely, World Wars I and II and a period in the late 1920's of high prices established and maintained by the Spanish-Italian mercury cartel—Mercurio Europeo (Pennington, 1959, p. 47). Following World War II, through the run to its peak price in 1965, the volatility can be explained in part by mercury's erratic demand and frequent overproduction. Since the early 1970's, the average price has generally trended downward. Growing awareness of health and environmental problems associated with mercury have resulted in numerous regulations restricting or eliminating mercury use in various applications, and governing its ultimate disposal. These regulations have the combined effect of lowering demand while at the same time increasing the supply of secondary mercury. As a result, the price has declined. Although it is believed that mercury producers have attempted to use sales restrictions or floor prices to stabilize or raise the price at various times during these three decades, these efforts have failed other than for very short periods.

Reference Cited

Pennington, J.W., 1959, Mercury—A materials survey: U.S. Bureau of Mines Information Circular 7941, 92 p.

Annual Average U.S. Mercury Price

(Dollars per flask[1])

Year	Price	Year	Price	Year	Price	Year	Price
1899	43.63	1924	69.76	1949	79.46	1974	281.69
1900	51.00	1925	83.13	1950	81.26	1975	158.12
1901	47.00	1926	91.90	1951	210.13	1976	121.30
1902	48.03	1927	118.16	1952	199.10	1977	135.71
1903	41.32	1928	123.51	1953	193.03	1978	153.32
1904	41.00	1929	122.15	1954	264.39	1979	281.10
1905	38.50	1930	115.01	1955	290.35	1980	389.45
1906	40.90	1931	87.35	1956	259.92	1981	413.86
1907	41.50	1932	57.93	1957	246.98	1982	370.93
1908	44.84	1933	59.23	1958	229.06	1983	322.44
1909	46.30	1934	73.87	1959	227.48	1984	314.38
1910	47.06	1935	71.99	1960	210.76	1985	310.96
1911	46.54	1936	79.92	1961	197.61	1986	232.79
1912	42.46	1937	90.18	1962	191.21	1987	295.50
1913	39.54	1938	75.47	1963	189.45	1988	335.52
1914	48.31	1939	103.94	1964	314.79	1989	287.72
1915	87.01	1940	176.86	1965	570.75	1990	249.22
1916	125.49	1941	185.02	1966	441.72	1991	122.42
1917	106.30	1942	196.35	1967	489.36	1992	201.39
1918	123.47	1943	195.21	1968	535.56	1993	187.00
1919	92.15	1944	118.36	1969	505.04	1994	194.45
1920	81.12	1945	134.89	1970	407.77	1995	247.39
1921	45.46	1946	98.24	1971	292.41	1996	261.61
1922	58.95	1947	83.74	1972	218.28	1997	159.52
1923	66.50	1948	76.49	1973	286.23	1998	139.84

[1] To convert to dollars per kilogram, multiply by .029008.

Note:
1899-1986, 76-pound flasks, *in* Engineering and Mining Journal.
1987-93, 76-pound flasks, 99.99%-pure mercury, *in* Metals Week (through June 14, 1993).
1993-98, 76-pound flasks, 99.99%-pure mercury, *in* Platt's Metals Week.