

# Energy statistics, October 2020

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October marked an increase in Canadian economic activity following the gradual lifting of COVID-19 related shutdowns in previous months. While this economic growth was accompanied by an uptick in demand for energy, overall energy production was down year over year. Total electricity generation rose in October, while all other energy sectors were down. Production of crude oil and equivalent products fell for the seventh consecutive month, while natural gas, coal and refinery production remained below October 2019 levels.

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## Crude oil production and exports continue to decline year over year, despite slow recovery

Production of crude oil and equivalent products fell 5.0% year over year to 22.0 million cubic metres (138.4 million barrels) in October. This followed substantial year-over-year decreases in August (-12.2%) and September (-7.6%), which were primarily attributable to scheduled maintenance at some oil sands facilities in Alberta and to reduced demand because of the pandemic. Despite the year-over-year decrease, October saw the highest monthly production since March 2020.

Extraction of heavy, light and medium crude oils, which has been on a downward trend since April 2020, decreased a further 14.2% year over year in October. The decrease was mostly due to lower production activity in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Crude bitumen production declined 8.2%, due to reduced in-situ production.

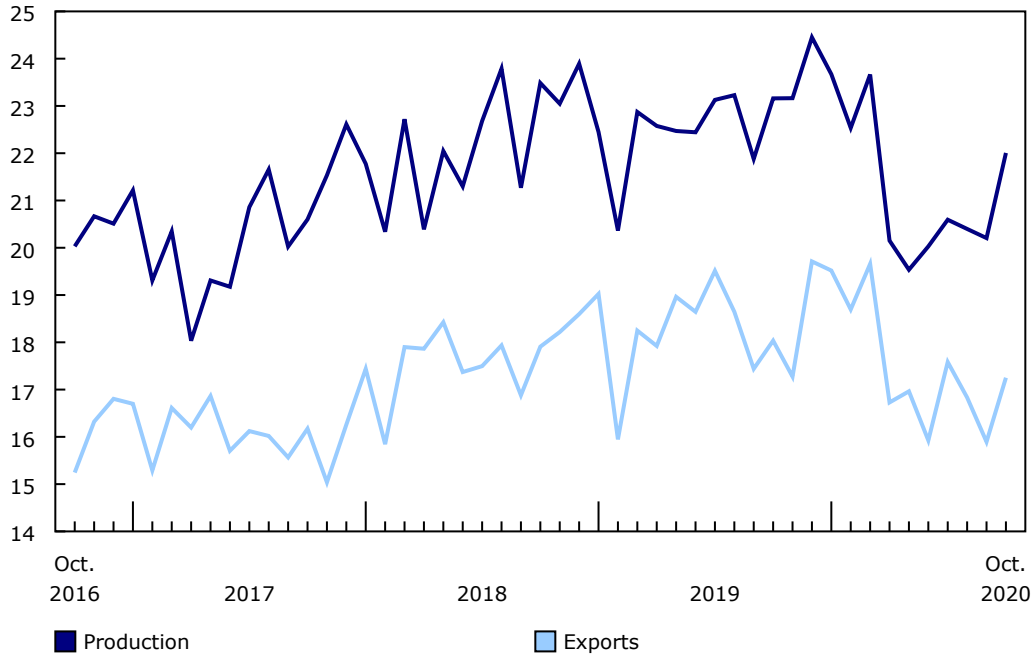
On the other hand, production of synthetic crude oil increased 12.9% year over year in October, following temporary shutdowns due to maintenance work performed during the summer. Daily production of crude oil (excluding equivalent products) rose 4.9% from September to 638.1 thousand cubic metres in October—the second consecutive monthly increase.

Global consumption of crude oil remained below levels a year earlier, due in large part to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the global economy. According to the US Energy Information Administration, global consumption of crude oil edged down 0.3% in October and remained 6.0% below October 2019 levels. Meanwhile, the price of crude oil increased 0.3% from September to October. Excluding September, [crude oil prices](#) have been trending upward since bottoming out in April.



**Chart 1**  
**Production and exports of crude oil and equivalent products**

millions of cubic metres



Source(s): Table 25-10-0063-01.

Exports of crude oil and equivalent products fell 4.3% year over year to 17.3 million cubic metres in October. The decline was due to a 48.5% decline in volumes shipped to the United States by other means (rail, truck and marine). Exports by other means have fallen sharply since the beginning of the pandemic, as demand for additional transport capacity remained low.

Partially offsetting the overall decrease, exports by pipelines were up 0.7%—the first year-over-year increase since March. Exports of crude oil and equivalent products to other countries also rose, with the majority of exported volumes originating from Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta.

Total imports of crude oil and equivalent products fell 14.4% to 3.3 million cubic metres in October. Despite the year-over-year decrease, this was the highest level of imports since March 2020, due primarily to higher demand and increased activity from Canadian refineries. Excluding August, [capacity utilization](#) in the petroleum and coal products industry (which includes refineries) has been trending upward since May.

Imports by entities other than refineries were down 18.6% year over year in October, as demand for equivalent products (diluent) in Western Canada remained soft.

### Decline in refinery production begins to ease

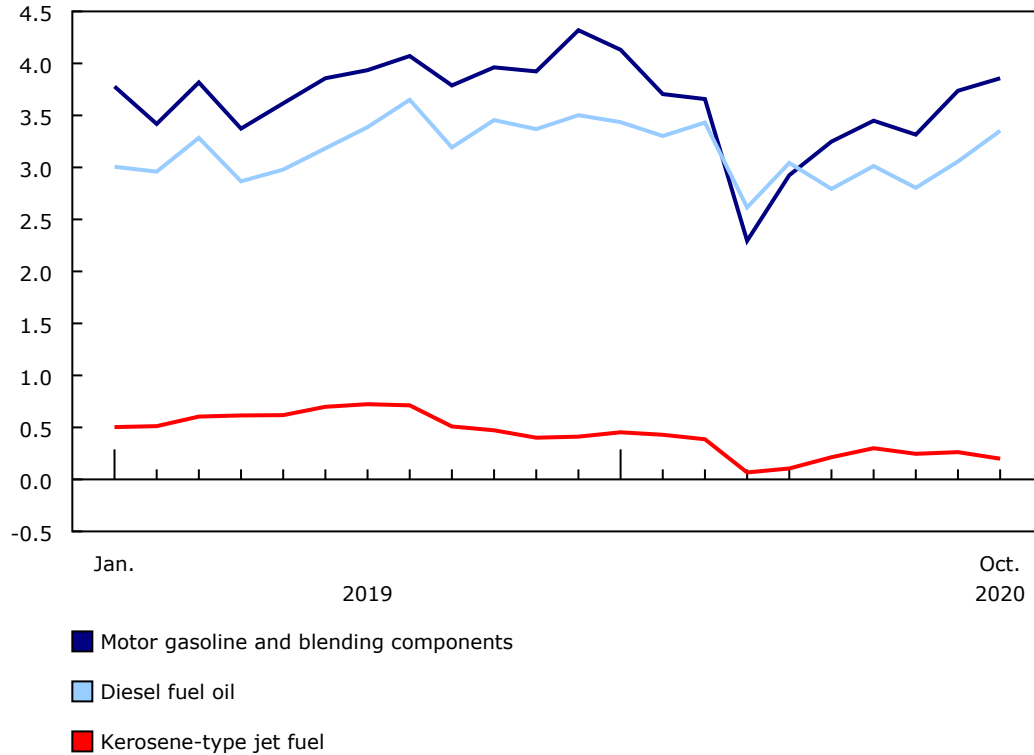
Following decreases in August (-21.0%) and September (-6.0%), net refinery production fell 0.8% year over year to 11.6 million cubic metres in October. Nevertheless, this was the highest production level since March, indicating a gradual recovery of refinery activity.

Net production of motor gasoline (including blending components and ethanol fuel) was down 2.6% to 3.9 million cubic metres in October. Despite the year-over-year decline, October net production exceeded the pre-pandemic level of March 2020, mostly due to a substantial increase in the production of blending components.

Net production of diesel fuel oil (-3.0%) and kerosene-type jet fuel (-57.9%) were also down year over year.

**Chart 2**  
**Net production of motor gasoline, diesel fuel and kerosene-type jet fuel**

millions of cubic metres



Source(s): Table 25-10-0076-01.

Domestic consumption of motor gasoline fell 13.7% year over year in October, while diesel fuel (-13.6%) was also down. Domestic consumption of jet fuel fell by over two-thirds (-67.0%), as travel restrictions continued to affect the airline industry. According to [aircraft statistics](#), domestic traffic was down by just over one-third (-34.2%) year over year in October, while movements to the United States fell 84.2% and other international traffic declined by 69.4% from the same month last year.

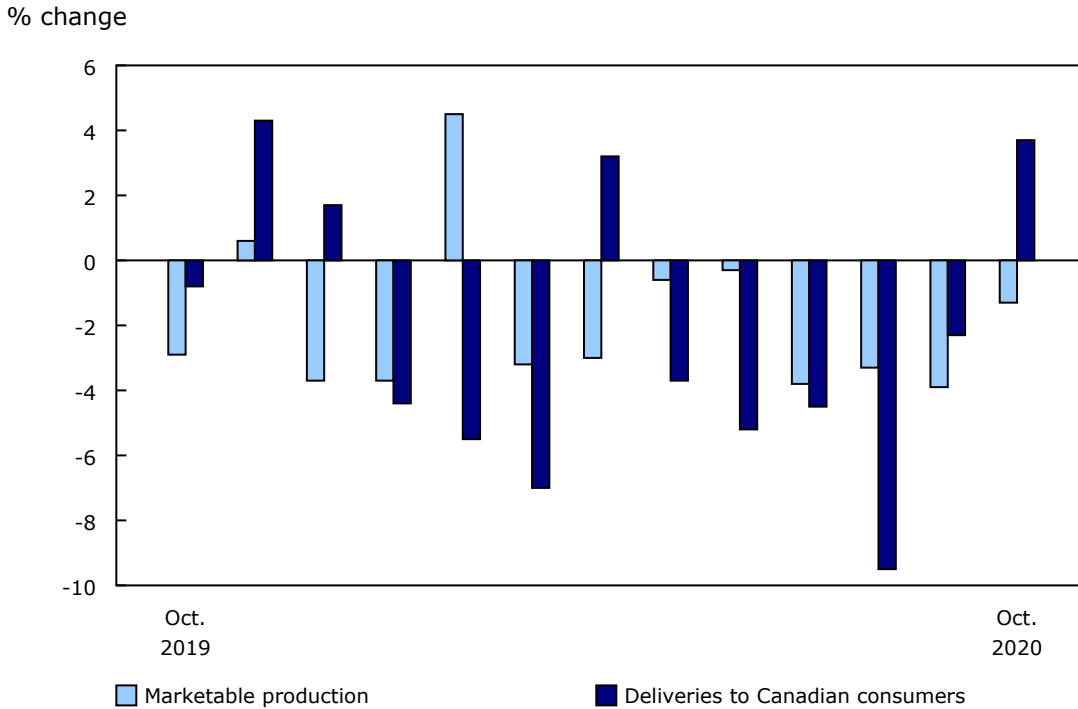
Demand for refined petroleum products remained weak in October. Sales of petroleum and coal products (which include refinery activity) were down 39.0% year over year, as reported by the [Monthly Survey of Manufacturing](#).

**Natural gas production down, demand up year over year**

Production of Canadian marketable natural gas fell 1.3% to 570.9 million gigajoules in October—the eighth consecutive year-over-year monthly decrease. This decline was due to lower production in Alberta (-2.5%), while production in British Columbia increased 2.9%.

Deliveries of natural gas to Canadian consumers were up 3.7% in October to 349.7 million gigajoules, the first year-over-year monthly increase since April (+3.2%). The rise was attributable to higher demand from the industrial sector (+4.5%) and greater seasonal demand by residential consumers for heating (+3.9%). Meanwhile, deliveries of natural gas to commercial and institutional consumers were down 1.2% on account of reduced activity and lockdowns.

**Chart 3**  
**Monthly marketable production and deliveries of natural gas to Canadian consumers, year-over-year change**



Source(s): Table 25-10-0055-01.

Overall, Canadian consumers paid 11.6% more year over year for natural gas in October, according to the [Consumer Price Index](#). The gain was driven by a 12.5% monthly increase in natural gas prices in Ontario. The residential sector in Ontario received close to half (47.3%) of all natural gas delivered to residential consumers in Canada in October.

Demand for Canadian natural gas continued to decline in the United States. Exports of natural gas by pipeline to the United States fell for the eighth consecutive month, down 3.1% year over year to 217.5 million gigajoules in October. Imports of natural gas rose 4.3% to 84.7 million gigajoules, with the majority of natural gas imported to Ontario.

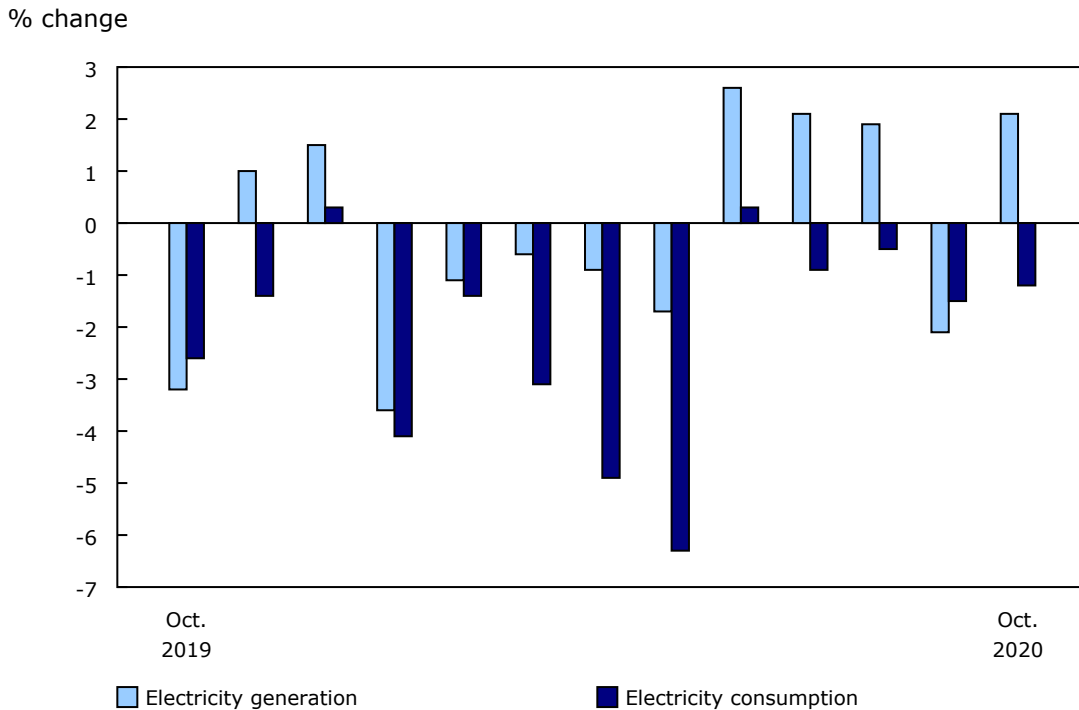
### Electricity generation up, while consumption continues to decline

Following a 2.1% decrease in September, electricity generation in Canada increased 2.1% year over year to 49.8 million megawatt-hours (MWh) in October. The rise was led by generation from renewable sources (including hydro, wind, solar and other sources), which rose 11.7% to 33.5 million MWh and accounted for just over two-thirds (67.2%) of Canada's electricity production in October.

By generation type, hydro was the single largest contributor to Canada's electricity mix, producing 29.4 million MWh of electricity, up 8.7% year over year. Wind (+14.3%) and solar (+10.6%) energy production also increased. In contrast, electricity generated from combustible fuels was down 2.7% to 10.1 million MWh, while nuclear generation decreased 17.2% to 7.0 million MWh, as refurbishment and annual maintenance continued at nuclear plants in Ontario and New Brunswick.

Electricity consumption decreased for the fourth consecutive month, down 1.2% year over year to 45.3 million MWh in October. The decrease was mainly due to lower demand in British Columbia (-8.3%), Alberta (-7.5%), and Saskatchewan (-4.9%). The overall decrease in demand for electricity was partially offset by increased demand in Quebec (+3.9%), due to higher seasonal demand for heating.

**Chart 4**  
**Electricity generation and consumption, year-over-year change**



Source(s): Tables 25-10-0015-01 and 25-10-0016-01

Electricity exports to the United States were up 35.4% year over year to 5.2 million MWh in October. The increase was due to higher demand from New York, Vermont, and California. Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia were the main exporting provinces. Imports of electricity from the United States were down 28.7% year over year to 0.6 million MWh, mostly due to lower demand for imported electricity in British Columbia. Both imports and exports of electricity tend to be volatile monthly.

**Production of coal continues to decline year over year**

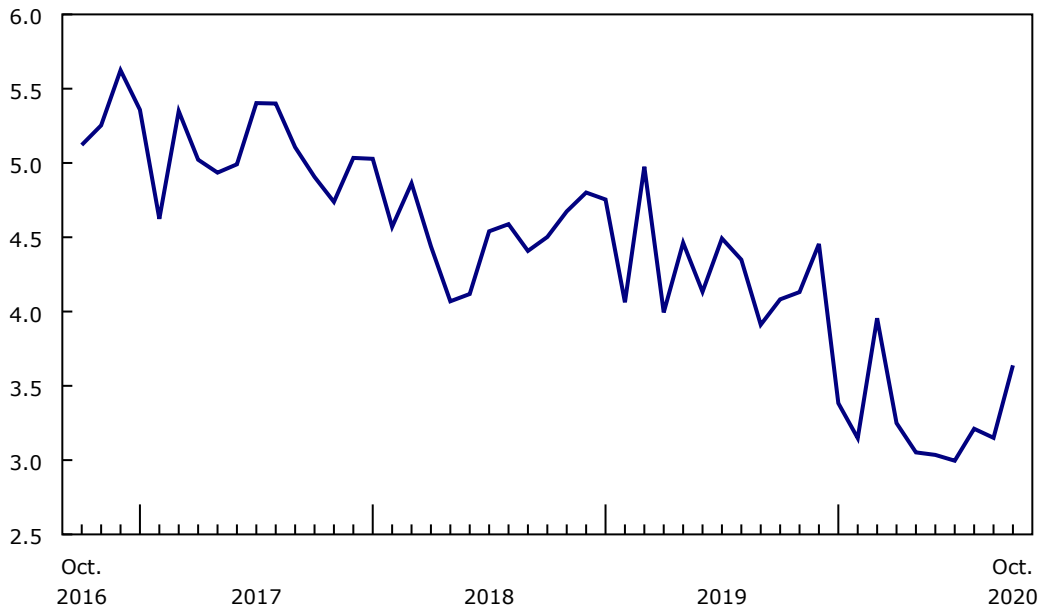
Coal production was down 10.9% year over year to 3.6 million tonnes in October, and coke production decreased 8.8% to 174.2 thousand tonnes.

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**Chart 5**  
**Coal production**

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millions of tonnes



Source(s): Table [25-10-0046-01](#).

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### Note to readers

The consolidated energy statistics table (25-10-0079-01) presents monthly primary and secondary energy by fuel type in terajoules (crude oil, natural gas, electricity, coal, etc.) and supply and demand characteristics (production, exports, imports, etc.) for Canada. The table uses data from a variety of survey and administrative sources. Estimates are available starting with the January 2020 reference month.

The survey programs that support the energy statistics release include the following:

- Crude oil and natural gas (survey number [2198](#), tables 25-10-0036-01, 25-10-0055-01 and 25-10-0063-01). Data for September 2020 have been revised.
- Energy transportation and storage (survey number [5300](#), tables 25-10-0075-01 and 25-10-0077-01). Data from August to September 2020 have been revised.
- Natural gas transmission, storage and distribution (survey numbers [2149](#), [5210](#) and [5215](#), tables 25-10-0057-01, 25-10-0058-01 and 25-10-0059-01).
- Refined petroleum products (survey number [2150](#), table 25-10-0076-01). National supply estimates for renewable fuels, including ethanol fuel and biodiesel, are now available in table 25-10-0076-01 starting with the January 2020 reference month. More detailed renewable fuel data are also available upon request.
- Electric power statistics (survey number [2151](#), tables 25-10-0015-01 and 25-10-0016-01). Data for September 2020 have been revised.
- Coal and coke statistics (survey numbers [2147](#) and [2003](#), tables 25-10-0045-01 and 25-10-0046-01).

Data are subject to revisions. Energy data are revised on an ongoing basis for each month of the current year to reflect new information provided by respondents and updates to administrative data. Historical revisions are also performed periodically.

Definitions, data sources and methods for each survey program are available under each survey number.

The Energy Statistics Program uses respondent and administrative data.

Data in this release are not seasonally adjusted.

**Available tables:** [25-10-0015-01](#), [25-10-0016-01](#), [25-10-0036-01](#), [25-10-0045-01](#), [25-10-0046-01](#), [25-10-0055-01](#), [25-10-0063-01](#), [25-10-0076-01](#) and [25-10-0079-01](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods:** survey numbers [2003](#), [2147](#), [2149](#), [2150](#), [2151](#), [2198](#), [5210](#), [5215](#), [5294](#) and [5300](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).