

Mineral Industry Surveys

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U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE THIRD QUARTER 2018

U.S. mine and plant production data for 14 selected mineral commodities are provided monthly (or quarterly) by the U.S. Geological Survey to the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System (FRS), for use in preparing its index of industrial production and the related capacity indexes and capacity utilization rates. These measures cover manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities, and they are among the key economic indicators monitored by the FRS for guidance in determining national monetary policy.

Construction Materials

The combined production of construction-related materials (cement, construction sand and gravel, crushed stone, and gypsum) in the third quarter of 2018 increased by approximately 5% compared with that in the second quarter of 2018 although gypsum was 6% lower in the same time period (tables 1, 2). Production of construction-related materials during the first 9 months of 2018 also increased compared with production in the first 9 months of 2017; production of cement was 2% higher, construction sand and gravel was 7% higher, crushed stone was 3% higher, and gypsum was 2% higher (fig. 1, table 1).

Base Metals

Production of most selected base metals decreased in the third quarter of 2018 compared with that in the second quarter of 2018 (fig. 2, table 1). Copper production was essentially unchanged in the third quarter of 2018, but production in the first 9 months of 2018 was 5% lower than production in the same time period of 2017. Secondary aluminum production decreased slightly in the third quarter of 2018 and the first 9 months of 2018 compared with production in the same time periods in 2017. Zinc production decreased by 17% in the first quarter of 2018 compared with that of the fourth quarter of 2017 but increased by 21% in the second quarter of 2018 and by 2% in the third quarter of 2018. Zinc production in the first 9

months of 2018 was 11% higher than production in the first 9 months of 2017. Lead production had been declining since the first quarter of 2016 but it increased by 13% in the second quarter of 2018 compared with production in the first quarter of 2018. Although lead production data for the third quarter of 2018 increased, actual data was withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data. Iron ore production decreased slightly compared with that in the second quarter of 2018 and was 6% higher than production during the first 9 months of 2017 (fig. 2, table 1).

Precious Metals

During the third quarter of 2018, gold and silver production increased by 6% and by 3%, respectively, compared with production in the second quarter of 2018. Gold and silver production in the first 9 months of 2018 were 12% and 13% lower, respectively, than production in the same time period of 2017 (fig. 3, table 1). The continued strike at a silver and lead mine in Idaho contributed to the decreased silver production in 2018.

Other Mineral Materials

Production of molybdenum and phosphate rock were 3% and 7% lower, respectively, than that of the second quarter of 2018. Production of soda ash was 5% higher in the third quarter of 2018 compared with the second quarter of 2018 (table 1).

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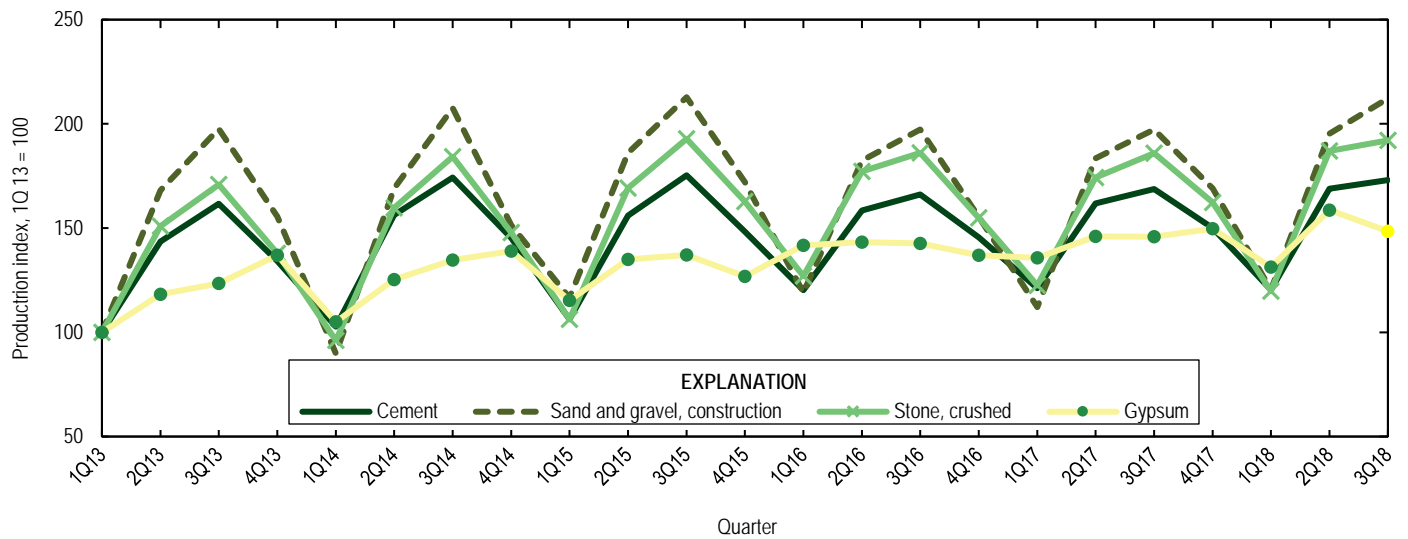


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2013 through the third quarter of 2018, indexed to the first quarter of 2013.

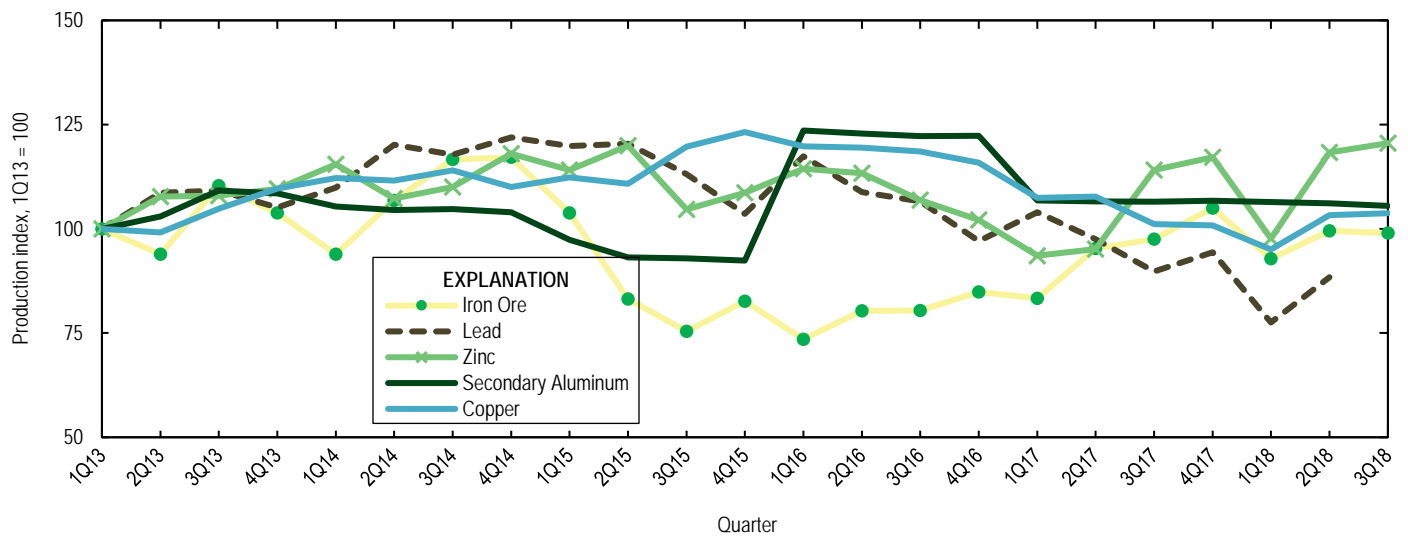


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2013 through the third quarter of 2018, indexed to the first quarter of 2013.

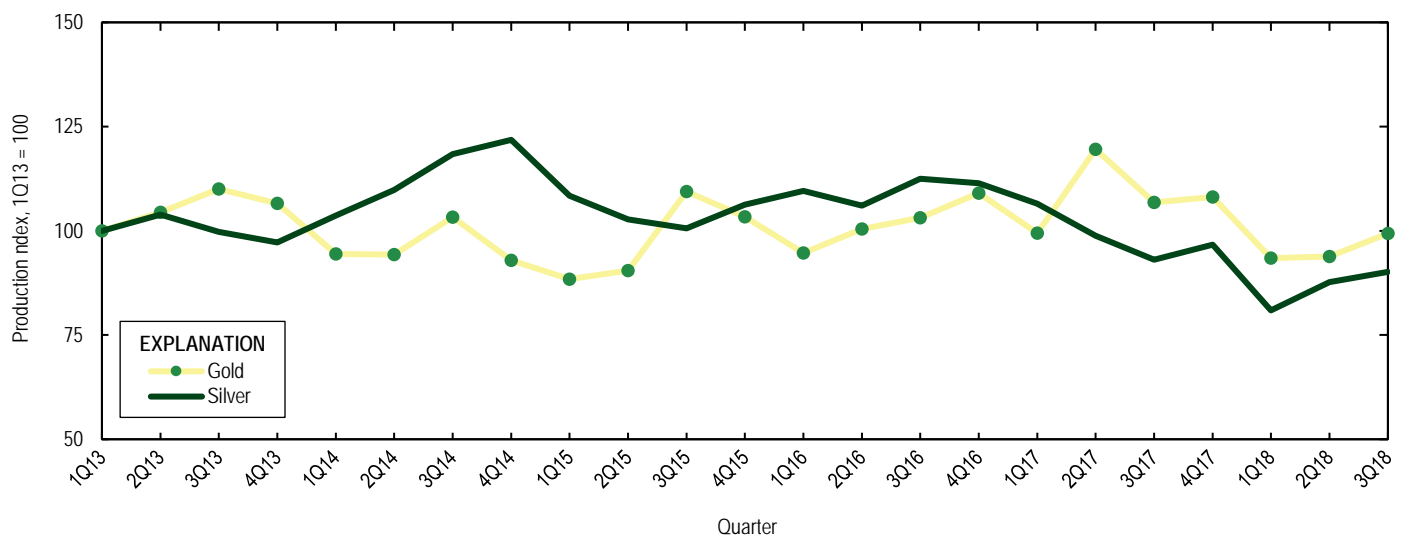


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2013 through the third quarter of 2018, indexed to the first quarter of 2013.

TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 3d quarter 2018 vs. 2d quarter 2018	Percent change, YTD 2018 vs. YTD 2017
Aluminum (secondary)	-1	-1
Cement	2	2
Copper	(2)	-5
Gold	6	-12
Gypsum	-6	2
Iron ore	-1	6
Lead	W	W
Molybdenum	-3	4
Phosphate rock	-7	-3
Sand and gravel, construction	9	7
Silver	3	-13
Soda ash	5	(2)
Stone, crushed	3	3
Zinc	2	11

W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

¹Based on data available through December 2018.

²Less than 0.5 percent.

TABLE 2
U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES, BY QUARTER^{1,2}

Commodity		2017					2018			1st quarter– 3d quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	2017	2018
Aluminum ³	thousand metric tons	210	209	209	209	837	209	208	207	628	624
Cement ⁴	million metric tons	17.0 ^r	22.6	23.6	21.0	84.2 ^r	16.8	23.6	24.2	63.2	64.7
Copper ⁵	thousand metric tons	324	325	305	304	1,260	287 ^r	312	313	955	912
Gold ⁵	metric tons	54.2	65.2	58.3 ^r	59.0	237	51.0 ^r	51.2 ^r	54.2	178	156
Gypsum ⁶	million metric tons	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.4	16.8	3.8	4.6	4.3	12.4	12.8
Iron ore ⁷	do.	10.4	11.9	12.2	13.1	47.6	11.6	12.4	12.4	34.5	36.4
Lead ⁵	thousand metric tons	81.3	76.2	70.2	73.8	302	60.6	68.6 ^r	W	228	W
Molybdenum ⁵	do.	9.8 ^r	9.4 ^r	10.6 ^r	11.0 ^r	40.7 ^r	10.8 ^r	10.2 ^r	9.9	29.8	30.9
Phosphate rock ⁸	million metric tons	6.6	7.1	7.1	6.9	27.7	6.4	7.1	6.6	20.8	20.1
Sand and gravel, construction ⁹	do.	153	250 ^r	269 ^r	230 ^r	902 ^r	164 ^r	266 ^r	289	672	720
Silver ⁵	metric tons	278	258	243	252	1,030	211	229 ^r	235	779	675
Soda ash ⁷	million metric tons	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	12.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	8.8	8.8
Stone, crushed ⁹	do.	258 ^r	366 ^r	391	341	1,350	252 ^r	393 ^r	405	1,010	1,050
Zinc ⁵	thousand metric tons	167	170	203	209	748	174	211 ^r	215	540	600

^rRevised. do. Ditto. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

¹Based on data available through December 2018.

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

³Aluminum alloys produced at secondary smelters in the United States, less primary aluminum consumed, primary silicon consumed, and other alloying ingredients consumed.

⁴Shipments of domestically produced portland and blended cement, including cement made from imported clinker, as a proxy for actual domestic cement production.

⁵Recoverable mine production.

⁶Calcined production.

⁷Mine production.

⁸Marketable mine production. First to fourth quarter total may not add to quarterly data owing to annual adjustments that are not broken out by quarter.

⁹Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Includes all 50 States. Data may not add to totals shown because of independent rounding and differences between projected totals by States and by divisions.