

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN JANUARY 2019

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in January 2019 were 3.71 million metric tons (Mt) and 2.41 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 120,000 metric tons (t), 14% less than that of December 2018 and slightly more than that of January 2018. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 78,000 t, less than half of those in December 2018 and nearly twice those in January 2018. Mine stocks were 7.24 Mt at the end of January 2019, 22% more than those held at the end of December 2018 and 13% less than those held at the end of January 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

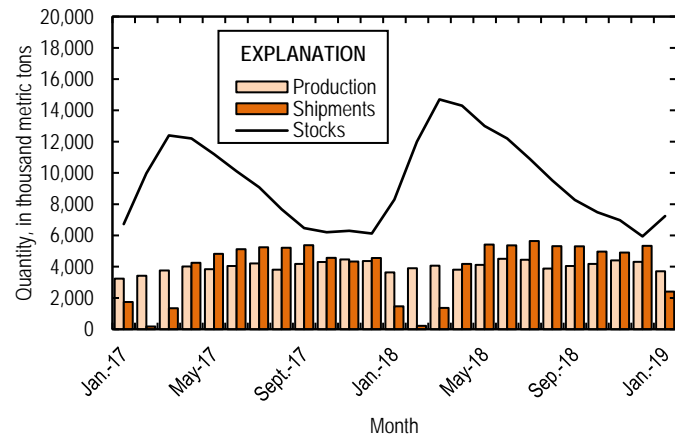


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from January 2017 through January 2019.

Monthly iron ore data are reported as gross weight unless otherwise noted and do not include iron metallics such as pig iron, direct-reduced iron, hot-briquetted iron, or iron nuggets. U.S. exports of iron ore were 556,000 t in January 2019, 45% less than those in December 2018 and 36% less than those in January 2018 (fig. 2, table 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 280,000 t in January 2019, 42% less than those in December

2018 and 12% less than those in January 2018 (fig. 2, table 4, 6).

Seasonal variations of exports, imports, shipments, and stocks during the winter months are attributed to freezing of waterways and the closing of the Soo Locks, which are used to transport iron ore in the Great Lakes region through the St. Lawrence Seaway.

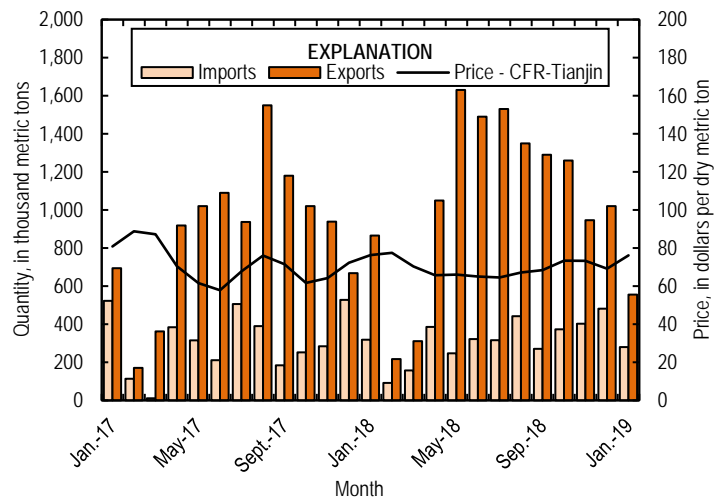


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from January 2017 through January 2019. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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TABLE 1
 U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE^{1,2}
 (Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons, usable ore)

Period	Production		Shipments ³		Stocks
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2018:					
January	3,640	3,640	1,470	1,470	8,290
February	3,900	7,540	214	1,680	12,000
March	4,070	11,600	1,360	3,050	14,700
April	3,810	15,400	4,180	7,230	14,300
May	4,120	19,500	5,420	12,600	13,000
June	4,510	24,000	5,370	18,000	12,200
July	4,440	28,500	5,640	23,700	10,900
August	3,880	32,400	5,310	29,000	9,520
September	4,050	36,400	5,300	34,300	8,270
October	4,180	40,600	4,970	39,200	7,480
November	4,400	45,000	4,910	44,100	6,970
December	4,310	49,300	5,340	49,500	5,940
2019, January	3,710	3,710	2,410	2,410	7,240

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallics.

³Includes rail and vessel.

TABLE 2
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production		Raw steel production			
	Basic oxygen furnace		Blast furnace		Electric furnace	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2018:						
January	1,920	1,920	2,240	2,240	4,650	4,650
February	1,790	3,710	1,980	4,210	4,620	9,270
March	1,970	5,680	2,270	6,490	5,060	14,300
April	1,930	7,600	2,200	8,690	4,720	19,000
May	2,070	9,680	2,400	11,100	4,860	23,900
June	2,060	11,700	2,330	13,400	4,730	28,600
July	2,100	13,800	2,370	15,800	5,010	33,700
August	2,030	15,900	2,340	18,100	5,140	38,800
September	2,010	17,900	2,350	20,500	4,910	43,700
October	2,060	19,900	2,360	22,800	5,190	48,900
November	2,030	22,000	2,380	25,200	5,020	53,900
December	2,100	24,100	2,490	27,700	4,990	58,900
2019, January	1,880	1,880	2,330	2,330	5,190	5,190

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 3
 U.S. EXPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY AND TYPE ^{1,2}
 (Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality and type of product	2018	2019	
	January Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Canada	761	545	47,200
Germany	42	--	--
Mexico	62	11	1,360
Other	(4)	(4)	7
Total	866	556	48,600
Concentrates	(4)	(4)	23
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	13
Pellets	824	556	48,600
Other	42	--	--
Total	866	556	48,600

-- Zero.

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

²All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of exports per month included in "Other."

³Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
 U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY AND TYPE^{1,2}
 (Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality of origin and type of product	2018	2019	
	January Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Brazil	247	162	20,500
Canada	73	--	--
Other	(4)	118	12,900
Total	319	280	33,300
Concentrates	10	50	4,010
Fine Ores	(4)	(4)	21
Pellets	309	230	29,300
Other	--	--	--
Total	319	280	33,300

-- Zero.

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

²All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
 U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT IN JANUARY^{1,2}
 (Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets		Total, all products	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
New Orleans, LA (20)	309	230	309	280
Other	--	--	10	(3)
Total	309	230	319	280

-- Zero.

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

²Customs Districts with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6
U.S. IRON ORE TRADE SUMMARY¹

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Exports		Imports	
	Quantity	Value ²	Quantity	Value ³
2018:				
January	866	62,500	319	36,100
February	217	18,900	92	11,000
March	311	25,300	157	18,800
April	1,050	80,600	386	40,700
May	1,630	110,000	247	22,700
June	1,490	105,000	322	33,100
July	1,530	103,000	316	29,600
August	1,350	107,000	442	49,400
September	1,290	103,000	271	23,100
October	1,260	100,000	373	35,200
November	946	77,200	403	38,500
December	1,020	82,900	482	50,400
January–December	12,900	975,000	3,810	388,000
2019, January	556	48,600	280	33,300

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

²Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.