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Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN MARCH 2011

U.S. mine production of iron ore in March 2011, on a daily average basis, was 140,000 metric tons (t), slightly greater than that for the prior month and 20% greater than that of March 2010, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Average daily production was 500 t greater than that of February 2011.

Average daily shipments in March 2011, at 66,600 t, were almost 2.7 times those of the prior month and 21% less than those of March 2010. Mine stocks at the end of March 2011 were 2.3 million metric tons (Mt) greater than the stocks held on February 28, a 31% increase. U.S. net imports of iron ore in February 2011 were 220,000 t, with exports more than 3.6 times imports.

North American Production.—Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. (Cleveland, OH) announced production for the first quarter of 2011 for its North American operations. Mine production for all of Cliffs' managed mines was 8.0 Mt, a 33% increase over that of the same period of 2010. Cliffs' share of the total production for the first quarter of 2011 was 6.1 Mt, a 12% increase over that of the same period in 2010, resulting in part from increased ownership in the Wabush Mine in Canada (Cliffs Natural Resources Inc., 2011).

World Production.—Rio Tinto plc announced that its first quarter production share of saleable iron ore and pellets worldwide for the 3 months ending March 31 was 41.9 Mt—a 3% decrease compared with that of the same period in 2010. Rio Tinto's Pilbara region iron ore production was disrupted by three tropical cyclones and widespread flooding during the first quarter of 2011 (Rio Tinto plc, 2011, p. 2, 9).

BHP Billiton Ltd. announced that its share of worldwide iron ore (wet) production for the first 3 months of 2011 was 33.2 Mt—a 7% increase compared with that of the corresponding period in 2010. Investments in infrastructure development resulted in increased production, despite seasonal weather impacts at the Western Australian operations and planned maintenance activities at the Samarco operations in Brazil (BHP Billiton Ltd., 2011, p. 1, 3).

In the first 3 months of 2011, Vale S.A. reported iron ore production of 71.5 Mt (including its Samarco joint venture). Iron ore production for the first quarter of 2011 represented an 11% decrease compared with that of the previous quarter and a 3.6% increase compared with that of the same quarter the previous year. The significant decrease in year-on-year iron ore production took place because of adverse weather conditions, which resulted in major reduction in output from the Carajás Mine in Brazil. Vale's pellet production for the first 3 months of 2011 was a quarterly record of 12.5 Mt—a slight increase compared with production in the previous quarter and a 19% increase compared with production in the same quarter the previous year. In an update to Vale's production information, in Oman, one of two new pellet plants, each with an annual production capacity of 4.5 Mt of direct reduction pellets, came onstream in April (Vale S.A., 2011).

References Cited

BHP Billiton Ltd., 2011, BHP Billiton production report for the nine months ended 31 March 2011: Melbourne, Australia, BHP Billiton Ltd. news release no. 13/11, April 20, 20 p. (Accessed May 5, 2011, via http://www.bhpbilliton.com/.)

Cliffs Natural Resources Inc., 2011, Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. reports first-quarter 2011 results: Cleveland, OH, Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. news release, April 28, 11 p. (Accessed May 4, 2011, via http://www.cliffsnaturalresources.com/.)

Rio Tinto plc, 2011, First quarter 2011 operations review: London, United Kingdom, Rio Tinto plc press release, April 13, 26 p. (Accessed May 5, 2011, via http://www.riotinto.com/.)

Vale S.A., 2011, Vale—1Q11 production report: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Vale S.A., May 5, 12 p. (Accessed May 9, 2011, via http://www.vale.com/.)

TABLE 1

U.S. PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE[1, 2]

(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Production		Shipments	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2010:				
March	3,630	9,930	2,630	5,970
April	3,780	13,700	4,790	10,800
May	4,560	18,300	5,230	16,000
June	3,700	22,000	4,940	20,900
July	4,630	26,600	5,060	26,000
August	4,550	31,200	5,050	31,000
September	4,430	35,600	4,540	35,600
October	4,600	40,200	4,340	39,900
November	4,640	44,800	4,720	44,600
December	4,660	49,500	4,600	49,200
2011:				
January	4,100	4,100	3,230	3,230
February	3,920	8,010	699	3,930
March	4,350	12,400	2,070	6,000

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

[2]Excludes byproduct ores.

TABLE 2

U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE IN MARCH[1, 2]

(Thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

State	Production		Shipments[3]		Stocks[4]	
	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010
Michigan	901	860	588	850	3,150	1,570
Minnesota	3,450	2,770	1,480	1,820	6,600	5,470
Total	4,350	3,630	2,070	2,670	9,750	7,040

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

[2]Excludes byproduct ore.

[3]Includes rail and vessel.

[4]Includes usable (marketable) material at mines, concentrators, pelletizing plants, and loading docks. Excludes stocks of crude ore at mine and concentrates at agglomerating complexes.

TABLE 3
CANADA: SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE [1, 2]

(Thousand dry metric tons)

Period	Newfoundland and Labrador	Quebec	British Columbia	Total
2010:				
February	1,130	872	3	2,000
March	1,390	1,100	6	2,500
April	1,500	1,510	7	3,020
May	1,840	1,340	11	3,190
June	1,970	1,710	10	3,690
July	1,630	1,350	12	2,990
August	1,350	1,390	12	2,760
September	1,130	1,830	8	2,970
October	1,490	1,350	7	2,850
November	2,620	1,990	10	4,620
December	1,640	1,440	5	3,090
Year total	19,000	17,000	93	36,100
2011:				
January	695	1,060	4	1,760
February	1,220	890	2	2,110

[1]Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.
[2]Includes production from steel plant waste oxides.

Source: Natural Resources Canada.

TABLE 4
PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL IN THE UNITED STATES, BY TYPE OF FURNACE [1]

(Thousand metric tons)

	Pig iron production, blast furnace		Raw steel production			
			Basic oxygen furnace		Electric furnace	
Period	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2010:						
February	2,530	4,870	1,960	3,790	3,720	7,610
March	2,870	7,740	2,560	6,350	4,240	11,800
April	2,030	9,770	2,820	9,170	4,140	16,000
May	2,830	12,600	2,560	11,700	4,440	20,400
June	2,800	15,400	2,530	14,300	4,300	24,700
July	2,450	17,800	2,050	16,300	4,320	29,000
August	2,490	20,300	2,250	18,600	4,130	33,200
September	2,600	22,900	2,370	20,900	4,000	37,200
October	2,150	25,100	2,390	23,300	4,160	41,300
November	2,470	27,500	2,220	25,500	3,950	45,300
December	2,340	29,900	2,580	28,100	4,060	49,300
2011:						
January	2,400	2,400	2,680	2,680	4,510	4,510
February	2,490	4,890	2,200	4,880	4,200	8,710

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

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 5

U.S. EXPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION AND TYPE[1, 2]

(Thousand metric tons)

Country of destination and type of product	2010				2011	
	3rd quarter	4th quarter	December	Total	January	February
Belgium	(3)	1	(3)	107	(3)	--
Canada	3,130	1,950	404	8,110	753	32
China	240	345	112	725	108	51
Finland	--	--	--	35	--	--
France	--	--	--	236	--	--
Germany	--	(3)	--	341	--	--
Mexico	16	2	(3)	188	(3)	(3)
Serbia	--	--	--	44	--	--
Singapore	5	--	--	5	--	--
Spain	25	(3)	--	156	--	--
Other[4]	2	1	2	11	1	1
Total	3,420	2,300	517	9,950	862	84
Concentrates	195	123	63	391	59	1
Coarse ores	100	124	49	259	49	51
Fine ores	4	1	(3)	78	31	1
Pellets	3,110	2,050	404	9,220	722	31
Briquettes	5	--	--	5	(3)	--
Other agglomerates	(3)	(3)	--	(3)	--	--
Roasted pyrites	1	(3)	(3)	1	(3)	(3)
Total	3,420	2,300	517	9,950	862	84

-- Zero.

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

[2]Includes agglomerates.

[3]Less than ½ unit.

[4]Includes all countries receiving less than 5,000 metric tons in any month during the 2-year period.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6

U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY AND TYPE[1, 2]

(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country of origin and type of product	2011					2010
	February		Year to date			January-February
	Thousand metric tons	Value[3] (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value[3] (thousand dollars)	Value[3] (dollars per ton)	Thousand metric tons
Brazil	--	--	(4)	12	54.19	37
Canada	304	38,200	475	59,400	125.13	701
Chile	--	--	49	7,320	149.39	--
Mexico	--	--	15	1,590	105.73	--
Norway	(4)	13	(4)	13	301.79	1
Peru	--	--	--	--	--	7
Russia	--	--	--	--	--	133
Spain	--	--	--	--	--	1
Trinidad and Tobago	--	--	--	--	--	(4)
Total	304	38,300	540	68,400	126.60	880
Concentrates	--	--	64	8,910	139.14	(4)
Coarse ores	--	--	(4)	12	54.19	--
Fine ores	208	25,700	279	34,500	123.53	114
Pellets	96	12,600	196	25,000	127.47	765
Briquettes	--	--	--	--	--	1
Other agglomerates	--	--	--	--	--	--
Roasted pyrites	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	304	38,300	540	68,400	126.60	880

-- Zero.

[1]Data, with the exception of the dollars per ton column, are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

[2]Includes agglomerates.

[3]Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

[4]Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 7

U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE IN FEBRUARY 2011[1, 2]

(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

	Type of product						
Country of origin	Concentrates	Coarse ores	Fine ores	Pellets	Briquettes and other agglomerates	Roasted pyrites	Total
Canada	--	--	208	96	--	--	304
Norway	--	--	(3)	--	--	--	(3)
Total	--	--	208	96	--	--	304

-- Zero.

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

[2]Includes agglomerates.

[3]Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 8

U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF PELLETS, BY COUNTRY[1]

	2011					2010
	February		Year to date			January-February
Country of origin	Thousand metric tons	Value[2] (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value[2] (thousand dollars)	Value[2] (dollars per ton)	Thousand metric tons
Brazil	--	--	--	--	--	37
Canada	96	12,600	196	25,000	127.47	595
Russia	--	--	--	--	--	133
Total	96	12,600	196	25,000	127.47	765

-- Zero.

[1]Data, with the exception of the dollars per ton column, are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

[2]Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 9
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE,
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT [1, 2]
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	February 2011	January-February 2011	January-February 2010
Baltimore, MD (13)	96	196	728
Buffalo, NY (09)	(3)	(3)	--
Cleveland, OH (41)	(3)	(3)	1
El Paso, TX (24)	--	7	--
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	--	(3)	37
New Orleans, LA (20)	208	336	112
Norfolk, VA (14)	--	--	1
Ogdensburg, NY (07)	(3)	(3)	1
Total	304	540	880

-- Zero.

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

[2]Includes agglomerates.

[3]Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 10
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF PELLETS,
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT[1]

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	February 2011	January-February 2011	January-February 2010
Baltimore, MD (13)	96	196	728
Buffalo, NY (09)	(2)	(2)	--
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	--	--	37
Total	96	196	765

-- Zero.

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

[2]Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.