

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## IRON ORE IN OCTOBER 2012

U.S. mine production of iron ore in October 2012 was 4.75 million metric tons (Mt), 9% greater than that in September. Production was 153,000 metric tons (t) on a daily average basis, 6 % greater than that of September and 7% more than that of October 2011. Average daily production in October 2012 was 8,460 t more\* than that of September. U.S. iron ore shipments were 4.46 Mt in October 2012, 4% less than those in September 2012.

Shipments were 144,000 t on a daily average basis, 7% less than those of September and 9% less than those of October 2011. Mine stocks at the end of October 2012 were 320,000 t more than those held on September 30, a 12% increase. U.S. exports of iron ore were 596,000 t and U.S. imports were 322,000 t.

### Domestic Production

Shipping throughout the Great Lakes region was affected by low water levels caused by severe drought conditions, which led to lower ship carrying capacities for iron ore freighters. Low water levels prompted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to identify \$200 million of developments to restore ideal depths for maximum shipping capacity. Congressional funding was expected to be \$865 million in fiscal year 2013 for dredging and marine port maintenance (Barrett, 2012).

### World Production

BHP Billiton Ltd. (London, United Kingdom) announced plans to spend \$6 billion on expansion projects in the Western Pilbara region in Australia. Projects were expected to be focused on harbor expansion at Port Hedland and mine capacity

expansion at Jumblebar Mine, as well as dual-track and rail yard expansions throughout 2013 (Mining Journal, 2012).

The United States Department of Defense released a report indicating that a railway system for transporting iron ore from Bamiyan, Afghanistan, would cost in excess of \$54 billion due to mountainous terrain. Alternative rail lines allowing exports into neighboring Pakistan were expected to cost \$45 billion. Other countries that have bought rights to mineral deposits, including China and India, are expected to release similar cost analysis reports (Nissenbaum, 2012).

South Africa's National Union of Mineworkers agreed to open talks in an attempt to end labor strikes affecting Kumba Iron Ore Ltd. (Centurion, Guateng, South Africa) after 300 miners at the Sishen Mine inhibited production (Stoddard, 2012). The series of labor strikes were expected to reduce shipments by 1 Mt during October 2012.

### References Cited

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Stoddard, Ed, 2012, South Africa wildcat strikes spread to more mines: Reuters, October 3. (Accessed October 14, 2012 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/03/us-safrica-mines-idUSBRE8920F820121003>).

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\*Correction posted on January 31, 2013.

TABLE 1  
U.S. PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Production		Shipments	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2011:				
October	4,440	44,400	4,910	43,100
November	4,600	49,000	5,010	48,100
December	4,630	53,600	6,040	54,200
2012:				
January	4,170	4,170	3,840	3,840
February	4,270	8,450	725	4,560
March	4,290	12,700	2,130	6,690
April	3,980	16,700	5,150	11,800
May	4,430	21,100	5,750	17,600
June	4,200	25,300	5,270	22,900
July	4,250	29,600	5,730	28,600
August	4,350	33,900	5,220	33,800
September	4,340	38,300	4,670	38,500
October	4,750	43,000	4,460	42,900

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Excludes byproduct ores.

TABLE 2  
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE IN OCTOBER<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

State	Production		Shipments <sup>3</sup>		Stocks <sup>4</sup>	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Michigan	892	1,260	1,380	950	2,160	1,480
Minnesota	3,540	3,490	3,540	3,510	2,500	1,490
Total	4,440	4,750	4,910	4,460	4,660	2,970

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

<sup>2</sup>Excludes byproduct ore.

<sup>3</sup>Includes rail and vessel.

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

Note: An imbalance of production and shipments compared with stock changes indicates an inventory adjustment at the mines of 32,235 metric tons.

TABLE 3  
CANADA: SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand dry metric tons)

Period	Newfoundland and Labrador	Quebec	British Columbia	Total
<b>2011:</b>				
October	1,390	1,460	6	2,850
November	1,210	2,340	5	3,550
December	1,340	2,200	1	3,540
January–December	15,800	19,800	59	35,700
<b>2012:</b>				
January	1,240	1,420	1	2,650
February	1,400	1,150	1	2,550
March	1,030	1,880	(3)	2,910
April	1,460	1,450	4	2,900
May	1,320	1,780	3	3,100
June	1,320	2,290	3	3,620
July	1,390	1,550	3	2,940
August	1,410	1,620	2	3,030
September	1,280	2,040	4	3,330
October	1,210	1,430	3	2,650

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes production from steel plant waste oxides.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: Natural Resources Canada.

TABLE 4  
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production, blast furnace		Raw steel production			
	Monthly	Year to date	Basic oxygen furnace		Electric furnace	
			Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
<b>2011:</b>						
October	3,010	26,600	2,630	26,200	4,140	43,800
November	2,990	29,600	2,680	28,900	4,040	47,800
December	3,190	32,800	2,840	31,700	4,290	52,100
<b>2012:</b>						
January	3,080	3,080	2,780	2,780	4,630	4,630
February	3,050	6,130	2,660	5,440	4,490	9,120
March	3,430	9,560	3,060	8,500	4,530	13,700
April	2,920	12,500	3,190	11,700	4,640	18,300
May	3,320	15,800	2,900	14,600	4,590	22,900
June	2,970	18,800	2,570	17,200	4,270	27,200
July	2,930	21,700	2,580	19,700	4,390	31,500
August	2,860	24,600	3,180	22,900	4,450	36,000
September	2,440	27,000	2,720	25,600	4,090	40,100
October	2,260	29,300	2,700	28,300	4,090	44,200

<sup>1</sup>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<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Country of destination and type of product	2011	2012				
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	September	October
Canada	7,050	1,290	1,850	1,590	340	421
China	3,190	814	1,820	1,020	359	44
Colombia	16	1	--	--	--	--
France	430	--	--	--	--	--
Germany	81	--	--	--	--	--
Japan	--	--	--	--	--	32
Mexico	51	48	98	240	94	93
Spain	187	--	--	(3)	--	--
Switzerland	46	--	--	--	--	--
Other	8	5	1	(3)	(3)	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>2,160</b>	<b>3,770</b>	<b>2,860</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>596</b>
Concentrates	628	148	449	411	144	93
Coarse ores	1,740	554	499	123	--	--
Fine ores	208	114	10	87	(3)	37
Pellets	8,470	1,340	2,810	2,240	649	443
Briquettes	(3)	(3)	(3)	--	--	--
Other agglomerates	1	(3)	1	(3)	--	23
Roasted pyrites	3	1	1	(3)	(3)	(3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>2,160</b>	<b>3,770</b>	<b>2,860</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>596</b>

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes agglomerates.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY AND TYPE<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country of origin and type of product	2011			2012		
	January–October Thousand metric tons	October		January–October Thousand metric tons	January–October	
		Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)		Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Argentina	74	--	--	81	11,400	140.43
Brazil	158	--	--	728	93,600	128.59
Canada	3,520	277	42,400	3,130	488,000	156.18
Chile	121	7	1,050	104	15,500	148.86
China	(4)	(4)	60	(4)	115	5,750.00
Finland	4	--	--	4	278	69.50
France	--	--	--	(4)	9	453.45
Germany	(4)	--	--	(4)	11	134.88
India	--	(4)	2	(4)	2	48.00
Latvia	--	--	--	(4)	3	3,150.00
Mexico	27	--	--	47	5,630	119.74
Norway	(4)	(4)	14	(4)	72	299.73
Peru	14	10	1,030	18	1,980	110.17
Russia	(4)	--	--	--	--	--
South Africa	147	--	--	39	6,360	163.00
Sweden	42	--	--	66	7,920	119.94
Trinidad and Tobago	8	--	--	--	--	--
Ukraine	(4)	--	--	(4)	15	54.17
United Kingdom	--	--	--	76	10,100	132.87
Venezuela	239	27	2,650	60	6,920	115.40
Total	4,360	322	47,200	4,350	648,000	149.09
Concentrates	590	53	5,170	783	92,100	117.60
Coarse ores	36	7	1,050	8	1,070	133.38
Fine ores	619	10	1,040	337	46,600	138.15
Pellets	3,060	251	39,900	3,210	508,000	158.00
Briquettes	12	--	--	--	--	--
Other agglomerates	34	(4)	60	(4)	115	5,750.00
Roasted pyrites	4	(4)	2	4	303	75.75
Total	4,360	322	47,200	4,350	648,000	149.09

-- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>Includes agglomerates.

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 7  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE IN OCTOBER 2012<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Country of origin	Type of product						Total
	Concentrates	Coarse ores	Fine ores	Pellets	Briquettes and other agglomerates	Roasted pyrites	
Canada	25	--	--	251	--	--	277
Chile	--	7	--	--	--	--	7
China	--	--	--	--	(3)	--	(3)
India	--	--	--	--	--	(3)	(3)
Norway	--	--	(3)	--	--	--	(3)
Peru	--	--	10	--	--	--	10
Venezuela	27	--	--	--	--	--	27
Total	53	7	10	251	(3)	(3)	322

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes agglomerates.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 8  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE PELLETS, BY COUNTRY<sup>1</sup>

Country of origin	2011		2012			
	January–October Thousand metric tons	October		January–October		
		Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>2</sup> (dollars per ton)
Brazil	--	--	--	284	40,700	143.27
Canada	3,060	251	39,900	2,860	457,000	160.08
United Kingdom	--	--	--	76	10,100	132.87
Total	3,060	251	39,900	3,210	508,000	158.00

-- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>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<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	January–October		October
	2011	2012	2012
Baltimore, MD (13)	1,290	1,440	--
Buffalo, NY (09)	(3)	--	--
Charleston, SC (16)	--	(3)	--
Chicago, IL (39)	477	612	53
Cleveland, OH (41)	1,940	1,570	251
Detroit, MI (38)	16	(3)	--
El Paso, TX (24)	18	--	--
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	20	54	--
Laredo, TX (23)	1	--	--
Los Angeles, CA (27)	(3)	(3)	--
Mobile, AL (19)	13	22	--
New Orleans, LA (20)	571	618	17
New York, NY (10)	(3)	(3)	--
Norfolk, VA (14)	1	--	--
Ogdensburg, NY (07)	1	(3)	--
Philadelphia, PA (11)	4	4	--
Port Arthur, TX (21)	--	27	--
San Francisco, CA (28)	5	--	--
Seattle, WA (30)	--	(3)	--
St. Albans, VT (02)	1	--	--
Tampa, FL (18)	10	3	--
Total	4,360	4,350	322

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes agglomerates.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 10  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE PELLETS,  
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	January–October		October
	2011	2012	2012
Baltimore, MD (13)	1,050	1,260	--
Buffalo, NY (09)	(2)	--	--
Chicago, IL (39)	10	41	--
Cleveland, OH (41)	1,940	1,570	251
New Orleans, LA (20)	70	345	--
Total	3,060	3,210	251

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.