

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN AUGUST 2015

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in August 2015 were 3.26 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.82 Mt, respectively (fig 1., table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 105,000 metric tons (t), 4% greater than that of July 2015 and 32% less than that of August 2014. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 155,000 t, 5% greater those of July and 24% less than those in August 2014. Mine stocks at the end of August 2015 were 17% less than those held in July and 4% less than those held in August 2014. As of August 2015, four iron ore mines and one direct-reduced iron (DRI) facility were either shut down or idled, resulting in reduced production and shipments.

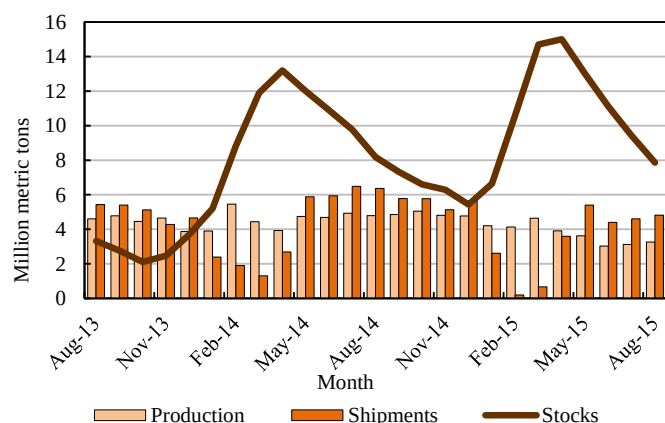


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from August 2013–August 2015. Source: U.S. Geological Survey

Monthly iron ore data are reported as gross weight unless otherwise noted and do not include iron metalics such as pig iron, direct-reduced iron, hot-briquetted iron, or iron nuggets. Data for iron metalics can be found in the Iron and Steel and the Iron Ore chapters in Minerals Yearbook, Volume I, Metals and Minerals.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 1.03 Mt in August 2015, 7% less than those in July and 36% less than those in August 2014. U.S. imports of iron ore were 572,000 t in August 2015, 43%

greater than those in July 2015 and 23% greater than those in August 2014 (fig. 2).

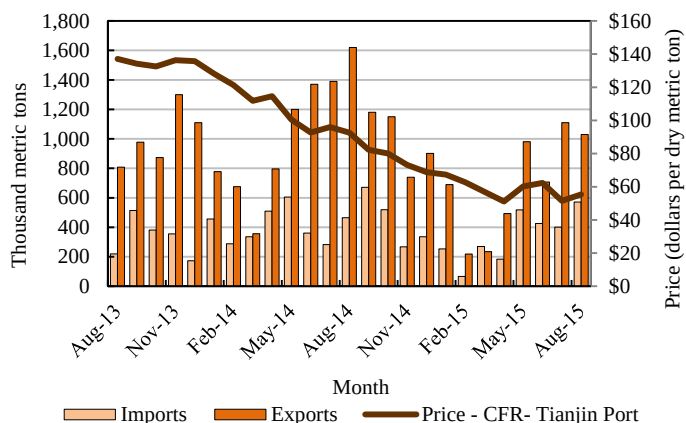


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for iron ore import fines, 62% iron content CFR, at Tianjin Port, from August 2013–August 2015. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

Industry News

U.S. Steel Corp. announced that its blast furnace, a major consumer of iron ore pellets, at Fairfield Works in Fairfield, AL, would close permanently in November. An electric arc furnace, which consumes steel scrap and iron metalics, was to replace the blast furnace and was scheduled for startup in the second half of 2016 (U.S. Steel Corp., 2015).

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References Cited

U.S. Steel Corp., 2015, U. S. Steel Proposes Permanent Closure of Blast Furnace and Most Flat-Rolled Finishing Facilities in Alabama:Pittsburgh, PA, U.S. Steel Corp press release, August 17. (Accessed October 9, 2015, at <http://uss.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=32722&item=137057>.)

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)

Period	Production		Shipments ³		Stocks
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2014:					
August	4,790	34,800	6,370	31,800	8,190
September	4,860	39,700	5,780	37,600	7,320
October	5,050	44,700	5,770	43,400	6,600
November	4,810	49,500	5,130	48,500	6,290
December	4,770	54,300	5,630	54,100	5,430
2015:					
January	4,210	4,210	2,610	2,610	6,640
February	4,130	8,340	194	2,810	10,600
March	4,640	13,000	670	3,480	14,700
April	3,910	16,900	3,600	7,080	15,000
May	3,620	20,500	5,400	12,500	13,000
June	3,030	23,500	4,400	16,900	11,100
July	3,120	26,700	4,610	21,500	9,420
August ^e	3,260	29,900	4,820	26,300	7,860

^eEstimated.

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, blast furnace		Raw steel production			
	Monthly	Year to date	Basic oxygen furnace		Electric furnace	
			Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2014:						
August	2,920	21,600	2,600	20,000	4,840	37,100
September	2,740	24,300	2,550	22,500	4,560	41,600
October	2,690	27,000	2,340	24,900	4,700	46,300
November	2,740	29,800	2,400	27,300	4,480	50,800
December	2,860	32,600	2,490	29,700	4,350	55,200
2015:						
January	2,760	2,760	2,380	2,380	4,500	4,500
February	2,310	5,070	1,980	4,370	3,870	8,370
March	2,390	7,460	1,990	6,360	4,050	12,400
April	2,330	9,790	1,990	8,340	4,080	16,500
May	2,530	12,300	2,180	10,500	4,310	20,800
June	2,670	15,000	2,340	12,900	4,180	25,000
July	2,830	17,800	2,460	15,300	4,200	29,200
August	2,690	20,500	2,330	17,600	4,240	33,400

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

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

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

Country and type of product	2014	2015		2015		
	January–August	August		January–August		
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Canada	5,280	897	\$74,100	4,820	\$430,000	\$89.10
China	1,490	121	4,240	122	4,360	35.75
Mexico	1,220	12	1,170	482	33,700	69.87
Other	172	1	39	38	3,090	81.42
Total	8,160	1,030	79,500	5,460	471,000	86.16
Concentrates	1,250	1	161	74	8,930	120.73
Fine ores	95	(4)	34	16	1,780	111.06
Pellets	6,130	1,030	79,300	4,960	436,000	87.87
Other	688	1	39	417	24,400	58.52
Total	8,160	1,030	79,500	5,460	471,000	86.16

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 AND TYPE ^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country of origin and type of product	2014	2015		2015		
	January–August	August		January–August		
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Argentina	71	23	\$3,170	53	\$5,930	\$111.94
Brazil	1,120	268	21,200	1210	103,000	84.86
Canada	1,990	209	24,700	1,210	154,000	127.52
Chile	40	44	2,710	105	7,890	75.12
South Africa	14	28	2,180	47	5,790	123.19
Other	70	(4)	6	65	4,380	67.35
Total	3,300	572	54,000	2,690	281,000	104.50
Concentrates	308	142	9,430	444	24,600	55.50
Fine ores	272	10	873	130	9,280	71.35
Pellets	2,690	420	43,600	2,080	244,000	117.75
Other	36	(4)	3	41	2,960	72.17
Total	3,300	572	54,000	2,690	281,000	104.50

--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^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets			Total, all products		
	January–August		August	January–August		August
	2014	2015	2015	2014	2015	2015
Chicago, IL (39)	49	--	--	344	384	83
Cleveland, OH (41)	618	561	103	618	561	103
Columbia-Snake (29)	--	--	--	--	23	23
Mobile, AL (19)	72	8	--	77	17	9
New Orleans, LA (20)	1,670	1,200	317	1,960	1,380	352
Other	282	308	--	304	331	2
Total	2,690	2,080	420	3,300	2,690	572

--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."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.