

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN FEBRUARY 2016

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in February 2016 were 3.02 million metric tons (Mt) and 106,000 metric tons (t), respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 104,000 t, slightly greater than that of January 2016 and 29% less than that of February 2015. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 3,660 t, the equivalent of about 6% of those in January and about one-half those in February 2015. Reduced shipments were the result of seasonal conditions on the Great Lakes that limit shipping. Mine stocks at the end of February 2016 were 35% greater than those held in January and 7% greater than those held in February 2015.

As of February 2016, five open-pit mines and co-located pellet plants, one tailings reclamation operation, and two iron metallics facilities were operational. Two iron ore mines were expected to remain idle through the first quarter of 2016, and three mines were idled indefinitely. One iron metallics plant, and its dedicated iron ore mine, were expected to remain idle through May 2017.

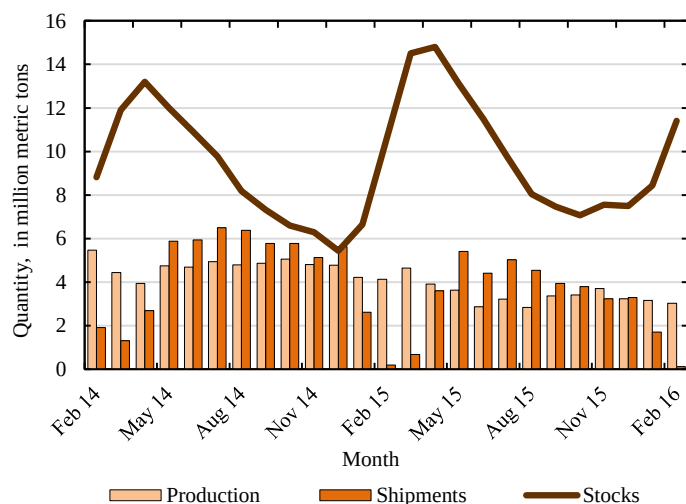


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from February 2014 through February 2016.

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. Data for iron metallics can be found in the Iron Ore chapter in the United States Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook, volume I, Metals and minerals.

U.S. exports of iron ore totaled 106,000 t in February 2016, the equivalent of 14% of those in January and less than one-half those in February 2015. U.S. imports of iron ore totaled 91,000 t in February 2016, almost triple those in January 2016 and 35% greater than those in February 2015 (fig. 2). U.S. imports and exports were impacted by the winter months, during which the closure of the Soo Locks and freezing on the Great Lakes cause imports and exports to fall from levels during the rest of the year.

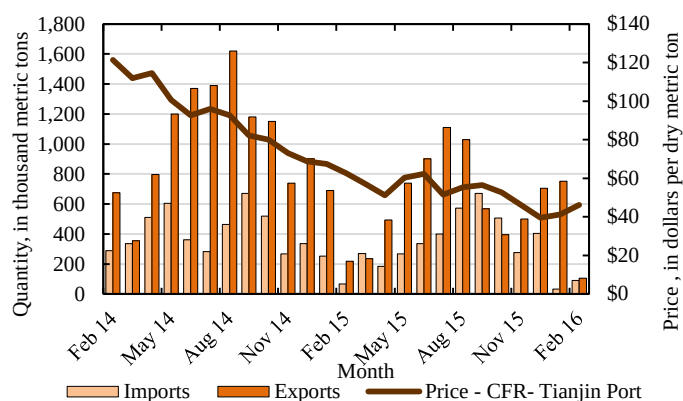


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for iron ore import fines, 62% iron content CFR, at Tianjin Port, from February 2014 through February 2016. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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)

Period	Production		Shipments ³		Stocks
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2015:					
February	4,130	8,340	194	2,810	10,600
March	4,640	13,000	670	3,480	14,500
April	3,910	16,900	3,600	7,080	14,800
May	3,620	20,500	5,400	12,500	13,100
June	2,870	23,400	4,400	16,900	11,500
July	3,220	26,600	5,020	21,900	9,740
August	2,840	29,400	4,540	26,400	8,040
September	3,360	32,800	3,940	30,400	7,460
October	3,400	36,200	3,790	34,200	7,070
November	3,700	39,900	3,230	37,400	7,550
December	3,230	43,100	3,290	40,700	7,490
2016:					
January	3,150	3,150	1,700	1,700	8,440 ^r
February	3,020	6,160	106	1,810	11,400

^rRevised.

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

²Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallics.

³Includes rail and vessel.

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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
2015:						
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
September	2,390	22,900	2,090	19,700	4,170	37,600
October	2,270	25,200	1,990	21,700	4,270	41,900
November	2,120	27,300	1,780	23,500	3,710	45,600
December	2,110	29,400	1,930	25,400	3,860	49,400
2016:						
January	2,200	2,200	1,910	1,910	4,250	4,250
February	2,260	4,460	2,010	3,920	4,170	8,420

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	2015			2016		
	January–February	February		January–February		
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Canada	785	105	\$8,550	857	\$71,600	\$83.50
Other	124	(4)	80	1	157	157.00
Total	909	106	8,630	858	71,700	83.58
Concentrates	6	(4)	18	(4)	37	9.25
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	11	(4)	25	6.25
Pellets	788	105	8,540	857	71,600	83.49
Other	115	(4)	55	(4)	99	24.75
Total	909	106	8,630	858	71,700	83.58

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	2015	2016		2016		
	January–February	February		January–February		
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Brazil	--	65	\$5,230	65	\$5,230	\$80.40
China	--	1	67	1	67	67.00
Ireland	--	4	1,870	4	1,870	468.00
Peru	22	20	6,260	20	6,260	312.85
Other	298	2	24	34	1,520	44.58
Total	319	91	13,400	122	14,900	122.44
Concentrates	30	1	74	7	395	56.43
Fine ores	22	24	8,150	50	9,320	186.32
Pellets	267	65	5,220	65	5,220	80.34
Other	(4)	(4)	5	(4)	5	855.67
Total	319	91	13,400	122	14,900	122.44

-- 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)

Customs district (code no.)	(Thousand metric tons)					
	Pellets			Total, all products		
	January–February	February	February	January–February	February	February
	2015	2016	2016	2015	2016	2016
Minneapolis, MN (35)	--	--	--	--	1	1
New Orleans, LA (20)	73	65	65	124	95	89
Other	195	--	--	196	28	2
Total	267	65	65	319	122	91

-- 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.