

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN MARCH 2017

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in March 2017 were 3.76 million metric tons (Mt) and 1.34 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 121,000 metric tons (t), slightly less than that of February and 20% greater than that of March 2016. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 43,200 t, nearly seven times those in February and slightly greater than those in March 2016. Mine stocks at the end of March 2017 were 24% greater than those held at the end of February and 9% less than those held at the end of March 2016.

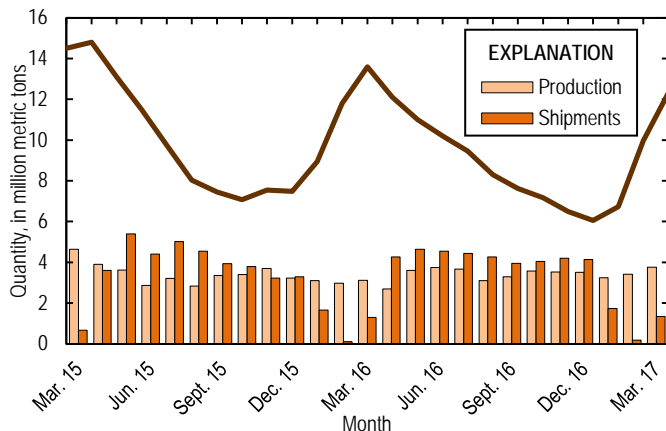


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from March 2015 through March 2017.

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.

U.S. exports of iron ore totaled 388,000 t in March 2017, more than double those in February 2017 and March 2016. U.S. imports of iron ore totaled 11,000 t in March 2017, less than

10% of those in February and 3% of those in March 2016 (fig. 2).

Seasonal variations of imports and exports 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.

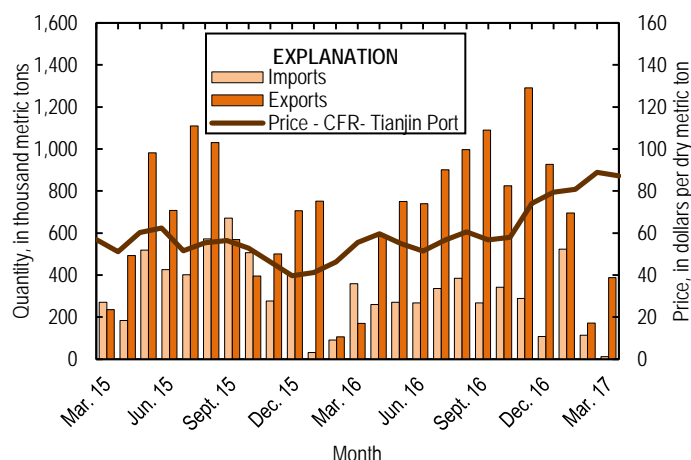


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for iron ore import fines, 62% iron content CFR, at Tianjin Port, from March 2015 through March 2017. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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
2016:					
March	3,120	9,190	1,300	3,060	13,600
April	2,700	11,900	4,260	7,320	12,100
May	3,610	15,500	4,640	12,000	11,000
June	3,740	19,200	4,540	16,500	10,200
July	3,670	22,900	4,430	20,900	9,470
August	3,100	26,000	4,270	25,200	8,300
September	3,290	29,300	3,950	29,100	7,630
October	3,580	32,900	4,050	33,200	7,170
November	3,520	36,400	4,200	37,400	6,500
December	3,510	39,900	4,140	41,500	6,050
2017:					
January	3,240	3,240	1,740	1,740	6,730
February	3,420	6,660	179	1,920	9,970
March	3,760	10,400	1,340	3,260	12,400

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
2016:						
March	2,380	6,840	2,040	5,960	4,390	12,800
April	2,150	8,980	1,860	7,820	4,460	17,300
May	1,910	10,900	2,210	10,000	4,770	22,000
June	2,280	13,200	1,950	12,000	4,550	26,600
July	2,220	15,400	1,890	13,900	4,480	31,100
August	1,860	17,200	2,160	16,000	4,490	35,600
September	1,770	19,000	2,070	18,100	4,120	39,700
October	1,610	20,600	1,940	20,000	4,290	44,000
November	1,660	22,300	1,920	22,000	4,260	48,200
December	1,810	24,100	2,090	24,100	4,370	52,600
2017:						
January	1,940	1,940	2,240	2,240	4,740	4,740
February	1,930	3,870	2,140	4,380	4,280	9,020
March	1,960	5,830	2,250	6,630	4,640	13,700

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

Country and type of product	2016	2017		2017		
	January–March	March		January–March		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Canada	1,030	214	14,000	1,020	67,700	66.59
China	--	30	2,450	30	2,450	81.57
Japan	--	144	8,930	144	8,930	61.99
Other	1	(4)	65	62	5,530	88.61
Total	1,030	388	25,500	1,250	84,600	67.51
Concentrates	(4)	(4)	10	4	539	134.75
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	22	(4)	41	10.25
Pellets	1,030	357	22,900	1,180	79,000	66.80
Other	(4)	30	2,480	68	5,090	74.78
Total	1,030	388	25,500	1,250	84,600	67.53

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

Country of origin and type of product	2016	2017		2017		
	January–March	March		January–March		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Peru	--	11	1,290	20	9,910	495.30
Other	481	(4)	10	628	55,200	87.96
Total	481	11	1,300	648	65,100	100.53
Concentrates	92	--	--	99	7,530	76.07
Fine Ores	--	11	1,300	20	9,930	496.60
Pellets	339	--	--	529	47,700	90.13
Other	50	--	--	--	--	--
Total	481	11	1,300	648	65,100	100.53

-- 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–March		March	January–March		March
	2016	2017		2016	2017	
Baltimore, MD (13)	--	--	--	--	(3)	--
Los Angeles, CA (27)	--	--	--	--	11	11
New Orleans, LA (20)	339	529	--	417	637	--
Other	--	--	--	64	(3)	--
Total	339	529	--	481	648	11

-- 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.